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time to reflect

Veterans look back on Afghanistan, Iraq odyssey with wide range of emotions



BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan n the rings beneath his steely eyes lies the toll of Army helicopter pilot Steven Martin's 10 years

The chief warrant officer 2 is no longer the eager, untethered 25-year-old he was when preparing for his first deployment. Idealism has been replaced by pragmatism; the excitement of battle has given way to the imperative of making it home to his twin girls.

"I've changed dramatically. What once was a romantic, naive idea of going to war to defeat terrorists has disappeared," the veteran of four Afghanistan deployments said in his unit's planning room at

Bagram Air Field. "And now I know my responsibility is just to my brothers in arms and to my family.'

With pride, weariness, nostalgia and some bitterness, veterans are looking back at a 13-year odyssey of war. Those deployed in Afghanistan have a frontrow seat to a transition from a campaign that, along with Iraq, defined the post-9/11 military generation and permanently altered many veterans' lives, for better or worse.

SEE REFLECT ON PAGE 3

A soldier stands watch after being bloodied by a bomb blast April 25, 2012, in the village of Salim Aka in Kandahar province, Afghanistan.

OSHUA L. DEMOTTS/Stars and Strip





Leaving Afghanistan Stars and Stripes photos chronicle 13 years of war » stripes.com/afghanistan

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"We experienced the Titanic. The only thing

missing was that we didn't sink." - Saadet Bayhan, one of hundreds

of passengers from a Greek ferry that caught fire off Albania, who confirmed that there were no fire alarms and that passengers woke each other up

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WAR/MILITARY

US airstrikes still crucial for Afghans

By SHASHANK BENGALI Los Angeles Times

GHAZNI, Afghanistan - For several days, Taliban fighters barricaded on a mountaintop lobbed rockets at the remote town of Sangar in the valley below. Residents fled while police holed up in their outposts and begged superiors for help.

At a base about 100 miles away, a contingent of Afghan army commandos prepared to board a helicopter to join the fight. But their commanders, worried the insurgents would shoot down the aircraft, called the American military first.

U.S. Apache attack helicopters swept in and launched missiles at the Taliban posts, said Afghan officials involved in the late September incident. The firepower scattered the insurgents, clearing the way for the Afghan commandos to break the siege in the eastern province of Ghazni.

The U.S.-led coalition officially denies carrying out airstrikes in the battle 125 miles southwest of Kabul, saying international forces provided only aerial surveillance. Under former President Hamid Karzai, coalition airstrikes in populated areas were sharply restricted, although distressed Afghan commanders often requested help anyway.

In this case, several Afghan officials and military commanders say, an American air assault ensured the district did not slip from government control in one of the largest clashes in months in a volatile province connecting Kabul with southern Afghanistan.

"The American helicopters hit two points high on the mountain where the Taliban were firing at us," said Gen. Haider Niqpai, commander of the Afghan army's 3rd Brigade, based in Ghazni. "That was the turning

Even as President Barack Obama prepares to declare an end to U.S. combat in Afghanistan on Dec. 31, the accounts of the battle in Ghazni illustrate how crucial — and politically sensitive — the U.S. role remains in the fight against Taliban-led insurgents.

"In just a few days, our combat mission in Afghanistan will be over," Obama said in a Christmas Day address. "Our longest war will come to a responsible end."

The U.S. force in Afghanistan will shrink to about 10,800 in January under a pared-down mission focused on training and counterterrorism. But under combat operations rules Obama approved last month, U.S. commanders will still be authorized to conduct airstrikes to help Afghan forces who are suffering record casualties in ground skirmishes with a resilient Taliban.

Outgoing Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel said recently that U.S. forces would provide "limited combat enabler support" to Afghan forces starting in January.

The airstrikes would allow the smaller U.S.



U.S. Marines from Bravo Company of the 1st Battalion of the 2nd Marines watch the explosion after calling in an airstrike during a gunbattle in July 2010 near Musa Qaleh, in northern Helmand Province, southern Afghanistan.

Afghan says 4 soldiers killed

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan — An Afghan official said four soldiers were killed while repelling a Taliban attack on an army checkpoint in a volatile region of the southern Helmand province.

The governor's spokesman, Omar Zwak, said another three soldiers were wounded in the fighting late Sunday in Sangin district.

Eight insurgents were killed, he said. The Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack. Sangin has seen fierce fighting be-

tween government forces and the Taliban in the six months since NATO troops withdrew.

From The Associated Press

force to support their Afghan allies, who have little air capability of their own, while exposing American troops to less danger than in ground fighting. But airstrikes also carry the risk of additional civilian casualties that stoke public anger, keeping the United States deeply enmeshed in a conflict that the White House promised to end.

In a farewell visit to Afghanistan in early December, Hagel insisted that Afghan forces had full responsibility for security and that all U.S. troops would withdraw by the end of 2016, as Obama has pledged. The broader U.S. combat policy "doesn't change any part of what the president's strategy is," Hagel said.

U.S. officials initially had signaled that

airstrikes under the new mission would be restricted to protecting remaining coalition forces, including an estimated 3,000 troops from other North Atlantic Treaty Organization countries. But the Afghan government under new President Ashraf Ghani has signaled greater acceptance of American military engagement.

Afghan officials in Kabul are careful to say that commanders were ready to fight the Taliban without U.S. air power.

"It's up to the Afghan security forces and the young commanders in the field to dem-onstrate that leadership," said Zubair Massoud, an adviser to Ghani's national security council. "It's possible for them to do without airstrikes '

Airstrikes in Afghanistan have dropped dramatically over two years as the coalition military presence has shrunk and Afghan forces have taken on most of the fighting. This year through November, U.S. warplanes launched 2,237 strikes in Afghanistan, half the number from two years earlier, according to statistics from U.S. Air Forces Central Command.

But as fighting increased last summer, American forces carried out 437 strikes in August and 441 in September, the most in a two-month span since mid-2012.

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WAR/MILITARY

Reflect: Life on deployment will be missed by some troops

FROM FRONT PAGE

On Sunday, the U.S.-led International Security Assistance Force, an amalgamation of dozens of NATO and allied nations, announced the end of its mission in Afghanistan. From Jan. 1, the military mission will be known as Resolute Support, focusing on training, advising and assisting, though that last term leaves a lot of wiggle room. Whatever the details of the new mission, there will be far fewer international troops in Affinghanistan under Resolute Support, and if it goes according to plan—as little has in Afghanistan—there will be no foreign troops in the country by the end of 2016.

Like the war itself, the end of Operation Enduring Freedom is ill-defined and hard to pin down. U.S. troops will likely see combat next year and beyond, and the feelings of veterans watching combat fade are equally complex.

At the height of the U.S. troop surge in 2010, 100,000 Americans were fighting across the rugged mountains and yawning deserts of Afghanistan, and roughly 2.5 million Americans have served in Iraq and Afghanistan since 2001. The war in Afghanistan has left more than 2,300 American troops and nearly 1,200 international allies dead. While the U.S. effort is significantly scaling down, there will still be about 11,000 American troops in the country Jan. 1 — about 1,000 more than President Barack Obama originally announced. Casualty figures could continue to rise.



rs and Stripes photos

After climbing a ridge line, Pfc. Alexander Simpson, of 1st Squadron, 91st Cavalry Regiment's Headquarters and Headquarters Troop reconnaissance platoon, scans a nearby valley in Nuristan province, Afghanistan, shortly after sunrise on July 13, 2007.

The war has cost troops friends, limbs, marriages; they've missed birthdays and Christmases, and they've formed bonds beyond most people's comprehension—all in a place that is still little more than a vague notion for many of their loved ones. Many grew up in war, spending most of their adult life on deployment or waiting for the next tour. For some, it is surreal to think they may be forever leaving a country that has so profoundly altered their lives.

"I hope that sometime in my life, I can return," said Army Maj. Rose L. Smyth, a 3rd Infantry Division medical administrator at Bagram. "To walk away from this — it will be a desire to show my children where I was and what I did and why it mattered."

As the U.S. military was stretched be-

As the U.S. military was stretched between two wars after the invasion of Iraq in 2003, deployments became so regular that troops started penciling the next deployment into the calendar as soon as they arrived home from a tour.

"It's like a home away from home," said Air Force Tech Sgt. Richard Bennett, a flight-line ramp supervisor on his fifth Afghanistan tour, along with two in Iraq. Those who served in the early days of

Those who served in the early days of Iraq and the presurge period in Afghanistan often look back fondly to that time of little or no Internet access, military rations and simple canwas tents. As the wars dragged on, blast-wall-encased bases grew, with such amenities as smoothie shops, massage studios and even a TGI Friday's to serve the increasing numbers of troops and

contractors With each new unit, there were more rules. Large installations, like Kandahar Air Field and Bagram, started to resemble stateside garrisons without the traditional nod to certain rules being relaxed in a combat zone. God

forbid you were

caught without a reflective belt.

"It was simpler, and it was more Army back then," said Army Staff Sgt. Junior Casillas, a veteran of the 2003 Iraq invasion and three tours to Afghanistan. "Then you had (Military Police) handing out speeding tickets (at Kandahar) and you're like, "What?!"

Casillas, 36, a flight engineer instructor, said cherishes his time with his wife and 9-year-old son, time that has been limited by steady deployment that has spanned more than a decade. Still, like many troops, Casillas has found life in combat seductive and says it will be tough to adjust to life without the next deployment just over the horizon.

"I don't mind it. You get used to it — sadly enough, you kind of miss it," he said. "You get home and things are kind of complicated."

Many Afghanistan veterans have seen what resembles two or three different wars, from the initial invasion and the relatively peaceful aftermath, to the violent years of the U.S. troop surge sent to quell a resurgent Taliban and, finally, the slow pullback to a largely training-and-advising mission that has marked the past two years.

"All we worked for the past 13 years is happening since (the Afghan security forces) can stand on their own," said Army Command Sgt. Maj. Christopher Gilpin, based at Bagram with the 3rd Infantry Division.

Many troops, however, fret about the state of the Afghan National Security Forces, who are largely on their own to combat an insurgency that has shown no sign of subsiding, albeit backed by coalition air power, intelligence and logistics help. Afghan casulties are rising sharply—troops and civilians—and many experts doubt the ability of the ANSF to hold its own long-term without continued support from international forces.

For those who served at the height of the fighting in Afghanistan, it is the controversial counterinsurgency operations — bat-

I hope that sometime in my life, I can return. ... It will be a desire to show my children where I was and what I did and why it mattered. 9

Army Maj. Rose L. Smyth
3rd Infantry Division medical administrator at Bagram Air Field

and th had (N ing tic 'What?' Casi said he

McElhinney was wounded just above the right buttock and below his builetproof vest in October 2010. There was no exit wound. He was bleeding profusely and in a lot of pain as his comrades worked to stop the loss of blood and comfort him at the same time. He later recovered.

Right: Pfc. Steve Biter, with the 1st Battalion, 501st Infantry Regiment, smells a rose while on patrol in the village of Danda Faqiran near the Pakistani border of eastern Afghanistan's Khost province in 2012.

Ahove: Lance Col. Matthew W.



tling insurgents with one hand while trying to win over the population with the other — that have defined the war, for better or for worse.

On his first deployment in Afghanistan, Martin, the helicopter pilot, served as a psychological operations soldier: He would sometimes find himself fighting his way through ambushes to deliver medical supplies and other humanitarian aid. In that microcosm of the war, troops were killing and getting killed just to drop off a box in hopes of winning the ever elusive "hearts and minds." The results of such operations were murky.

Martin is proud of his service and his commitment to his fellow soldiers. What it all means, though, that's for politicians thousands of miles from the dying to decide, he said.

"The idea that the war is over, mission accomplished?" Martin said. "After 10 years in Afghanistan, I'm still not sure what the mission is."

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Report: VA woes known before scandal erupted

Stars and Stripes

Long before news broke that the Veterans Affairs hospital in Phoenix had manipulated waiting lists to hide the fact that veterans were facing long delays to see doctors, senior department officials in Washington had been made aware of serious problems at the hospital, according to a report in The New York Times.

The Times wrote that filings before a federal administrative board in the case of the Phoenix hospital director, Sharon Helman,

had who been contesting her Nov. firing, show how offimuch cials knew about patient backlogs, shortages of medical personnel and clinic space.



and long waiting lists.

The filings included the sworn statement of Susan Bowers, the executive in charge of dozens of hospitals and clinics from western Texas to Arizona, that she had warned Washington that if any VA medical center was going to "implode," it would be Phoenix.

Bowers, who retired in May, said that before Helman became the head of the Phoenix facility in 2012, an audit showed the hospital was out of compliance with a directive requiring that patients be on an official electronic waiting list, the Times wrote.

Bowers said that when she submitted a report stating that the Phoenix hospital was out of compliance, she was pressured by other officials to say that it was compliant

She also said in court papers that beginning in 2009, she briefed retired Army Gen. Eric Shinseki, then the VA secretary, and other top officials several times per year about the patient backlog and other problems in Phoenix.

The scandal shook the confidence of millions of veterans who use the department's hospitals and clinics, and led to Shinseki's oustAfter a whistle-blower charged

that there were secret waiting lists for care at Phoenix, an investigation by the department's inspector



Shinseki

general found that 1,700 patients there had not been placed on proper waiting lists and may never have received medical care, the Times noted. A top official in the inspector general's office also tes tified that delays for care had contributed to some patients' deaths.

Last week, a federal judge found it was "more likely than not that at least some senior agency leaders were aware, or should have been, of nationwide problems getting veterans scheduled for timely appointments" and that the Phoenix hospital "as a part of the nationwide system also had those problems."

The Times reported that the judge ruled that the department failed to provide sufficient evidence that Helman should have been fired over the conditions at Phoenix. Still, he upheld her dismissal on charges of taking favors from a health care industry consultant.

In filings in Helman's case, the department also acknowledged that before April, three highranking officials, including a deputy undersecretary for health and the associate director for scheduling and access, were aware of issues at Phoenix related to wait times, the electronic waiting list or patient appointment backlogs.

A sworn statement by the former undersecretary for health Dr. Robert Petzel, also stated that before Helman arrived, the "VA was aware of access issues" in Phoenix. Shinseki, however, said that he was "unable to recall the contents of the briefings" from Bowers and "did not recall any of the allegations regarding Phoenix being raised during any budget presentation," according to



MIKE GROLL/AF

Iraq combat veteran Adan Olid, center, works on a song with songwriters Darden Smith, left, and Marshall Crenshaw during the Songwriting With Soldiers retreat at the Carey Institute for Global Good in November in Renses

Veterans and musicians meet to craft personal songs

By MICHAEL HILL The Associated Press

RENSSELAERVILLE, N.Y. -Adan Olid's life took a turn on San

Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge. As he stood at a railing, the troubled Iraq War veteran decided not to jump. He felt inspired to work through the "ghost-like feeling" of nost-traumatic stress disorder

Now that pivotal moment for Olid has inspired a song — written, performed and recorded by professionals. The former Marine is one of

more than 100 veterans who have turned their stories into sometimes affectingly personal songs at "Songwriting With Soldiers" retreats. Vets work with musicians hunched over guitars who turn anecdotes and raw feelings into lyrics and melody. Songs are laced with lyrics about "bullet catchers," sacrifice, "hillbilly armor," death and, in the case of Olid, renewal on a bridge.

"I think music does a lot more than a pill can do," said Olid, 29 who wants to share his song with other veterans.

Olid was deployed to Iraq three times before leaving the Marines as a sergeant in 2011. Like with many veterans, the stress of close calls or memories of dving friends lingered when he returned to Southern California.

Music has been a comfort to

ny Cash and the old rockabilly stars. He uses recorded songs at his job as a counselor for fellow veterans and even plays guitar a little. It was a natural progression for him to attend the recent songwriting retreat at the Carey Institute for Global Good in rural Rensselaerville, near his Albanyarea home.

The program typically pairs vets with songwriters. Olid was matched on a recent chilly Saturday morning with two singersongwriters he met that weekend: program founder Darden Smith and recording artist Marshall Crenshaw.

Smith began excavating for that "deep emotional spot" that can be the hook for a decent song. How's your family? What does that tattoo mean? Olid opened up about his PTSD and images of a man in a documentary on Golden Gate bridge suicides that inspired him to take a fateful drive up to San Francisco a couple of years ago.

"They're filming him jump. I remember thinking to myself that whatever it was that he had from iumping, I wanted that as well, Olid told the songwriters. "That freedom, that escape, I wanted

"That's our song, man," Smith

Smith got the idea for the songwriting program after playing at He didn't realize how much he had in common with the young troops until he talked to them. The songwriting retreats he began two years ago are partly a way to bridge the civilian-soldier gap.

Through the program, more than a dozen songwriters have teamed up with veterans on about 120 songs with titles like "Battle Rages On," "Funeral Detail" and "Searching for Why."

"The most important thing is to get the story, actually the words of the soldier, in the song. It's a true collaboration then," Smith said.

"Different soldiers at different crisis points in their lives, they listen to their songs.

Olid's song, "I Couldn't See the Sun Shine," came together in a few hours that morning. Smith and Crenshaw fiddled with lines and chord progressions. Smith typed lyrics on his computer. Olid sat back in his chair, expanding on thoughts and adding ideas

The song, like Olid's bridge story, has a hopeful ending. As he stood on the bridge, an officer asked him how he was doing. It made him realize he "wasn't a ghost anymore." He resolved to come out of his dark tunnel.

Similarly, the tune sung by Smith ends with an invitation to "come and see the sun shine on the Golden Gate.'

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War on terrorism

Syria turns to harsh recruitment measures

By Hugh Naylor The Washington Post

BEIRUT - The Syrian regime has intensified efforts to reverse substantial mannower losses to its military with large-scale mobilizations of reservists as well as sweeping arrest campaigns and new regulations to stop desertions and draft-dodging.

The measures have been imposed in recent months because of soaring casualties among forces loyal to President Bashar Assad, as well as apparent increases in desertions and evasions of compulsory military service, analysts say. Some speculate that the moves also could be part of steppedup military efforts to win more ground from rebels in anticipation of possible peace talks, which Russia has attempted to restart to end nearly four years of conflict.

But the government's measures have added to already simmering anger among its support base over battlefield deaths. The anger may be triggering a backlash that in turn could undermine Assad's war aims, Syrians and analysts say.

"These things have obviously angered core constituents, and they show just how desperate the regime is to come up with warm bodies to fill the ranks of the Syrian Arab Army," said Andrew Tabler, a senior fellow and Syria expert at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

In October, the government

These things ... show just how desperate the regime is to come up with warm bodies to fill the ranks of the Syrian Arab Army. 7

Andrew Tabler Washington Institute for Near East Policy

boosted activations of reserve forces. Tens of thousands of reservists have been called up, and soldiers and militiamen have erected scores of checkpoints and increased raids on cafes and homes to apprehend those who refuse to comply. Similar measures target those who avoid regular military service, a compulsory 18-month period for men 18 and

In recent weeks, the regime also began stepping up threats to dismiss and fine state employees who fail to fulfill military obligations, according to Syrian news websites and activists. New restrictions imposed this fall have made it all but impossible for men in their 20s to leave the country, they say.

Since the start of the uprising

in 2011, authorities have used arrests and intimidation to halt desertions, defections and evasion of military service - but not to the extent seen recently, Syrians and analysts say. Men who are dragooned into the army appear to be deserting in larger numbers, they say, and the government's crackdown is driving many of those men — as well as more of the many draft evaders - into hiding or abroad.

"I can't go back. All these things would make it certain that I'd be forced into the military," said Mustafa, 25, a Syrian from Damascus who fled to Lebanon in September because of the new measures. Citing safety concerns, he asked that only his first name be used.

Pakistan intensifies its campaign vs. militants

BY TIM CRAIG AND CAROL MORELLO The Washington Post

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan After pledging for years to crack down on violent Islamists, Pakistani authorities are now taking exceptional steps to do so, with a major military operation against the militants and a vow to rein in radical propaganda.

The government's campaign has intensified in the wake of a massacre at an elite army-run school in Peshawar this month, reflecting a striking change in public opinion about the danger posed by the extremist groups.

The effort suggests an important political shift in a country where parties have traditionally laid out competing views on how to confront homegrown militants. Pakistani political leaders appeared together last week in the capital of Islamabad to embrace the government's new anti-terrorism measures, which include registering all religious schools and blocking funding of extremist groups.

In all, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's government and the country's powerful military have agreed on 20 steps to tackle the terrorist threat. The government plans to try terrorism suspects in military courts, block the use of social media and other forms of communications by terrorists, and establish a new 5,000-member paramilitary force that can take the fight against militancy deep into Pakistani cities.

The army has vowed to fur-ther expand its military offensive against the Pakistani Taliban and groups such as al-Qaida in the country's remote tribal areas bordering Afghanistan.

U.S. officials and western analysts note Pakistan has a nearly decadelong history of making promises to combat terrorism that it proved unwilling or unable to



British boxer Amir Khan, third from left, who is of Pakistani origin, offers prayers on Monday with members of the military at a school attacked this month by the Taliban in Peshawar, Pakistan. The government's campaign against militants has intensified since the massacre.

keep. And they remain skeptical that Pakistan has the wherewithal for a sustained campaign against an Islamist militancy that includes groups suspected of longtime ties

to Pakistani intelligence officials. Still, Obama administration officials say they are encouraged that, after years of delay, Pakistan's leaders have acknowledged the problems they face and are starting to take determined steps to address them.

Pakistan finds itself at a crossroads. Over the past decade, more than 50,000 Pakistani civilians and soldiers have been killed in terrorist attacks and the fight against extremists. The rising violence has wrecked the economy and threatened the nuclear-armed country's ties to the West.

But many of the attacks have generated little outrage in a public that had become inured to violence.

The Dec. 16 assault on the school, however, was a deeply personal blow to Pakistanis. Not only were most of the 149 victims teenagers but many were on the fast track toward careers in the military, which is highly esteemed in this country. Even conservative religious scholars are now rallying behind the government's

"Pakistan is fighting its own war of existence and at a very critical juncture," said Allama Tahir

Ashrafit,

scholar who Pak-

heads

istan's reli-

council.

noted Islamic

gious clerics

fit is a do-or-die situation for Pakistan. 7 Allama Tahir

Ashrafit is a do-or-die Islamic scholar situation for Pakistan."

The attack touched Pakistanis not just because of the age of many of the victims. It occurred on the anniversary of one of Pakistan's bleakest moments. On Dec. 16, 1971, the Pakistani army suffered a humiliating defeat in the Indo-Pakistan war, which led to half of the country breaking away and forming

the new nation of Bangladesh. The school massacre also came as Pakistanis are increas-

ingly uneasy about radicalism in the region. NATO troops ended their 13-year combat mission in Afghanistan on Sunday, leaving behind just 12,500 coalition soldiers to help train and support the Afghan army in its fight against Taliban insurgents.

Meanwhile, the Islamic State

group's rise in Iraq and Syria has generated fears that Pakistani radicals could adopt the group's brutal techniques.

Even before the siege of the school, Pakistani authorities had launched a major military operation in the northwestern part of the country to drive the Pakistani Taliban and other Islamist groups from the lawless border region.

A senior American official, who asked not to be identified in order to speak freely, said the ongoing offensive in North Waziristan is more serious in intent, longer in duration and greater in scope than the U.S. government had

Attack on funeral in Iraq kills at least 15

BAGHDAD — A suicide bomber struck a funeral north of the Iraqi capital on Monday, killing at least 15 mourners, a government official said.

Interior Ministry spokesman Saad Maan told The Associated Press that the bomber blew himself up inside a funeral tent in a farming area outside the mainly Sunni town of Taji, about 12 miles north of Baghdad.

He said another 26 mourners were wounded in the attack.

The funeral was for the father of two members of pro-government Sunni militias, known as Sahwa or Awakening Councils. The Sahwa militias began forming after the outbreak of Iraq's sectarian fighting in 2006 and allied with U.S. troops against al-Qaida in Iraq, a precursor to the Islamic State extremist group.

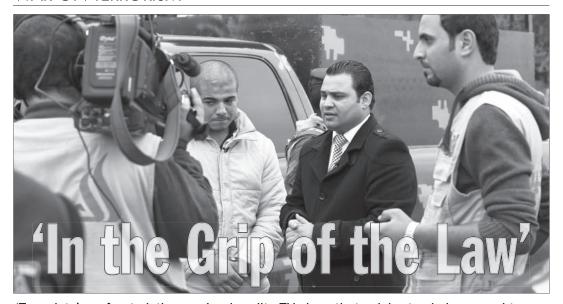
The government later took over the militias, integrating some members in the security forces.

Iraq hopes to revive the militias in order to fight the Islamic State group, which has exploited widespread Sunni discontent with the Shiite-led government.

No one has claimed responsibility for Monday's attack in the Taii area, but it bore the hallmarks of the Islamic State group.



WAR ON TERRORISM



'Terrorists' confront victims on Iraqi reality TV show that celebrates beleaguered troops

By VIVIAN SALAMA The Associated Press

aider Ali Motar, 21, was convicted of terrorism charges about a month ago for helping to carry out a string of Baghdad car bombings on behalf of the Islamie State extremist group. Now, he is a reluctant cast member in a popular reality TV show.

"In the Grip of the Law" brings convicted terrorists face to face with victims in surreal encounters and celebrates the country's beleaguered security forces. The show, produced by state-run Iraqiyya TV, is among dozens of programs, cartoons and musical public service announcements aimed at shoring up support for the troops after their humiliating defeat last summer at the hands of the Islamic State group, which now controls about a third of the country.

on a chilly, overcast day in mid-December, the crew arrived at the scene of one of the attacks for which Motar was convicted, with a heavily armed escort in eight military pickup trucks and Humvees. Passing cars clogged the road to watch the drama unfold, but they were quickly shooed away by soldiers.

After being pulled from an armored vehicle, a shackled Motar found himself face to face with the seething relatives of the victims of the attack

"Give him to me — I'll tear him to pieces," one of the relatives roared from behind a barbed-wire barrier.

A cameraman pinned a microphone on Motar's bright-yellow prison jumpsuit as he stood alongside a busy Baghdad highway looking bewildered by his surroundings.

Once the cameras were rolling, the show's host, Ahmed Hassan, quizzed the still-shackled prisoner. When Motar was confronted by one of the victims, a young man in a wheelchair who lost his father in one of the attacks, the convict began weeping as the cameras rolled.

ing as the cameras roued.

Iraq has seen near-daily car bombs and other attacks for more than a decade, both before and after the withdrawal of U.S.-led troops at the end of 2011. But the central



PHOTOS BY HADI MIZBAN/AP

Top: Ahmed Hassan, a reality show host, center right, stands next to Haider Ali Motar as the TV crew films "In the Grip of the Law" in Baghdad. Above: A man, center, expresses anger at Motar, not seen, as they perform a scene.

message of the show, the filming of which began last year, is that the security forces will bring perpetrators to justice.

"We wanted to produce a program that offers clear and conclusive evidence, with the complete story, presented and shown to Iraqi audiences," Hassan told The Associated Press. "Through surveillance videos, we show how the accused parked the car, how he blew it up, how he carries out an assassination."

assassination."
The episodes often detail the trail of evidence that led security forces to make the arrest. Police allow the camera crew to film the evidence — explosive belts, bomb-making equipment or fingerprints and other

DNA samples.
"We show our audiences the pictures, along with hard evidence, to leave no doubts that this person is a criminal and paying for

his crimes," Hassan said.

All of the alleged terrorists are shown confessing to their crimes in one-on-one interviews. Hassan said the episodes are filmed only after the men have confessed to a judge, insisting it is "impossible" that any of them are innocent.

"The court first takes a preliminary testimony, and then they require a legal confession in front of a judge." Hassan said. "After obtaining the security and legal permission, we are then allowed to film those terrorists."

Human rights groups have long expressed concern over the airing of confessions by prisoners, many of whom have been held incommunicado in secret facilities.

"The justice system is so flawed and the rights of detainees, especially those accused of terrorism (but not only) are so routinely We show our audiences the pictures, along with hard evidence, to leave no doubts that this person is a criminal and paying for his crimes.

> Ahmed Hassan host of "In the Grip of the Law"

violated that it is virtually impossible to be confident that they would be able to speak freely," Donatella Rovera, of Amnesty International, said in an email.

"In recent months which I have spent in Iraq, virtually every family I have met who has a relative detained has complained that they do not have access to them, and the same is true for lawyers."

In a September statement, Amnesty International cited longstanding concerns about the Iraqi justice system, "where many accused of terrorism have been convicted and sentenced to long prison terms and even to death on the basis of 'confessions' extracted under torture."

Such concerns are rarely if ever aired on Iraqi TV, where wall-to-wall programming exalts the security forces. Singers embedded with the troops sing nationalist songs during commercial breaks. In another popular program, called "The Quick Response," at traveling correspondent interviews soldiers, aiming to put a human face on the struggle against the extremists.

Back at the makeshift barricade set up for "In the Grip of the Law," security officials insist they are sending a message of deterrence.

"Many of these terrorists feel a lot of remorse when they see the victims," said the senior intelligence officer overseeing the shoot, who declined to be named since he often works undercover. "When people see that, it makes them think twice about crossing the law"

NATION



SAN WALSH

Former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush, center, recites the Pledge of Allegiance before giving the keynote address at the National Summit on Education Reform in November in Washington. Denisha Merriweather, second from left. who benefited from the Florida tax credit for education, introduced Bush.

A bigger tent? Republicans facing minority challenge

By Steve Peoples
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The faces of the Republican Party's most am-

bitious members are changing. Long criticized as the party of old, white men, the Republicans' next class of presidential contenders may include two Hispanic senators, an Indian-American governor, a female business leader and a black neurosurgeon. In a group that could exceed a dozen Republican White House prospects, all but a few are in their 40s or 50s, while one of the oldest white men is a fluent Spanish speaker whose wife is a native Mexican.

The diverse group is a point of pride for those Republicans who have long pushed for a welcoming "big tent" party able to accommodate more diversity.

date more diversity.

"This is a diverse nation, and we need to be a diverse party," said Carly Fiorina, the former Hewlett-Packard, chief executions.

tive and only Republican woman openly weighing a 2016 bid. "That doesn't mean we sacrifice our principles, but it means we need to look like and understand and empathize with the nation."

Republican strategists hope that a more diverse slate of candidates will help appeal to a growing minority population that has given Democrats a decided advantage in the past two presidential contests.

It's unclear, however, whether changing the faces of the Republicans' messengers will be enough to take back the White House in 2016. As critics point out, Republicans have alienated some minority obters by pushing for voter identification laws that disproportionately affect nonwhites, while resisting comprehensive changes in the immigration and criminal justice systems.

"They're going to have to make a decision about whether they're going to build a meaningful multiracial coalition by respecting and defending the rights of all people in this country," said Benjamin Jealous, a former president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, a leading civil rights group, "or whether they're going to continue to play this dog-whistle politics that have besmirched the Republican Party since the days of Barry Goldwater."

The Republican Party has struggled with attracting support from minorities since Democratic President Lyndon B. Johnson signed into law the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Goldwater, the Republican presidential nominee, opposed it. But Jealous and others suggest there are signs of hope in a crowded and diverse 2016 Republican class.

Florida Sen. Marco Rubio and Texas Sen. Ted Cruz are both Hispanic, while Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal is the first Indian-American governor in the U.S.

Obama warns GOP he plans to use veto pen in 2015

By Josh Lederman The Associated Press

HONOLULU — Warning from President Barack Obama to Republicans in the U.S. Congress: I have a veto pen and, come January, I won't be afraid to use it.

Since taking office in 2009, Obama has vetoed legislation only twice, both in fairly minor circumstances. But with Republicans set to take full control of Congress next year, Obama is losing his last bulwark against a barrage of bills he doesn't like: the Senate.

"I haven't used the veto pen very often since I've been in office," Obama said in an NPR interview airing Monday. "Now, I suspect, there are going to be some times where I've got to pull that pen out."

He added: "I'm going to defend gains that we've made in health care. I'm going to defend gains that we've made on environment and clean air and clean water."

Obama's notice to the Republicans came as he sought to set the tone for a year in which Congress and the president are on a nearcertain collision course. Buoyed by decisive gains in last month's midterm elections, Republicans are itching to use their newfound Senate majority to derail Obama's plans on immigration, climate change and health care, to name

To overturn Obama's veto, Republicans would need the votes of two-thirds of the House and Senate. Their majorities in both chambers are not that large, so they would still need to persuade some Democrats to defy the president.

But Obama said he was hopeful that at least on some issues, that won't be necessary, because there's overlap between his interests and those of congressional Republicans. On that point, at least, he's in agreement with incoming Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell.

"Bipartisan jobs bills will see to the president's desk, and he'll have to make decisions about idelogy versus creating jobs for the middle class," McConnell said in response to Obama's comments. "There's a lot we can get done together if the president puts his famous pen to use signing bills rather than vetoing legislation his liberal allies don't like."

Potential areas for cooperation include tax reform and global trade deals — both issues where Obama and Republicans see at least partially eye to eye.



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Younger adults no slouches at volunteering

By Connie Cass The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Tired of hearing people grouse about a tuned-out, apathetic younger generation?

Well, here's a comeback: Today's young Americans are more serious about giving back than their parents were.

In fact, those younger than 30 now are more likely to say citizens have a "very important obligation" to volunteer, an Associated Press-GfK poll finds.

The embrace of volunteering is striking because young people's commitment to other civic duties — such as voting, serving on a jury and staying informed — has dropped sharply from their parents' generation and is lower than that of Americans overall.

Among six civic activities in the AP-GfK poll, volunteering is the only one that adults under 30 rated as highly as older people did.

"I want to make my city where I live a better place," Morgan Gress, 24, of Washington, said after sorting and hanging donated clothes with co-workers who chose to volunteer in lieu of an office holiday party. After you volunteer, she said, "You never walk away feeling you didn't have a great time, or help someon out, or learn something new."

Today's young adults grew up amid nudges from a volunteering infrastructure that has grown exponentially since their parents' day, when the message typically came through churches or Scouting.

In the decades since President

George H.W. Bush championed America's volunteer groups as "a thousand points of light" at his 1989 inaugural, the number of nonprofits has skyrocketed. The Martin Luther King Jr. holiday and Sept. II have become days of service. Individuals launch community projects through social media, instead of hanging posters and making phone calls.

Twenty percent of adults younger than 30 volunteered in 2013, up from 14 percent in 1989, according to census data analyzed by the Corporation for National and Community Service. It seems likely that the Millennials' volunteering rate will climb higher, because past generations have peaked in their 30s and 40s, when many parents give their time to schools, youth groups or community improvements.

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NYC police boss urges dialogue

Cites social, economic factors behind tension

By Jonathan Lemire The Associated Press

NEW YORK — New York City's police commissioner called for a "lot less rhetoric and a lot more dialogue" to defuse the tension between police officers and the population they protect.

Commissioner William Bratton, speaking on NBC's "Meet The Press" on Sunday, a day after the funeral for one of two police officers gunned down in their patrol car, said the 'pent-up frustrations" that have caused people to take to the streets in recent weeks go far beyond policing policies across the nation.

"This is about the continuing poverty rates, the continuing growing disparity between the wealthy and the poor," he said. "It's still about unemployment issues. There are so many national issues that have to be addressed that it isn't just policing, as I think we all well know."

Bratton said rank-and-file officers and much of America's police leadership feels under attack, including "from the federal government at the highest levels."

He urged: "See us. See the police. See why they have the anxieties and the perceptions they have."

Bratton also appeared on CBS' "Face the Nation," where he defended Mayor Bill de Blasio, saying it was wrong for hundreds of police officers to turn their backs to a video monitor outside a Queens church as de Blasio spoke at the funeral of Officer Rafael Ramos.

"I certainly don't support that action," he said. "That funeral was held to honor Officer Ramos. And to bring politics, to bring issues into that event, I think, was very inappropriate."

Some police officers blame de Blasio for creating an atmosphere of negativity toward the New York Police Department in the city after a grand jury declined to charge an officer in the police chokehold death of Eric Garner on Staten Island.

Bratton acknowledged that the morale of officers is low and said their actions "unfortunately" reflected the feelings of some toward the mayor.

The gesture at Ramos' funeral came amid contentious contract negotiations with the city. The rank-and-file police union did not claim credit for the symbolic protest, and its head, Patrick Lynch, repeatedly dodged reporters' attempts to ask about it after Ramos' funeral.

Bratton said de Blasio was "totally supportive" of officers and had contributed hundreds of millions of dollars outside the department's budget this year, much of it focused on officer safety enhancements.

After Bratton, former Mayor Rudolph Giuliani told the CBS program that it was wrong for officers to turn their backs on de Blasio or to try to blame him for officers' deaths.

But he also said de Blasio should apologize to the police department because he "created an impression with the police that he was on the side of the protesters."

"Say you're sorry," Giuliani urged.



ETH WENIG /A

New York City Police Commissioner Bill Bratton, left, speaks during a news conference at police headquarters in New York on Monday as Mayor Bill de Blasio looks on. Bratton on Sunday called for more talk and less rhetoric to ease tension between police and civilians.

Shootings leave mayor in bind

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio saw success at fulfilling many of his liberal campaign promises but has at times been overshadowed by events beyond his control, most notably the recent killings of two police officers amid a wave of protests against police conduct.

As De Blasio winds down his first year in office, he has appeared triumphant against some of those outside forces and has become a national progressive voice, but the police shooting has pushed his mayoralty into its biggest crisis yet.

The double slaying, which came weeks The agrand jury declined to indict an officer in the chokehold death of an unarmed black man, Eric Garner, has heightened de Blasiot delicate efforts to support the New York Police Department yet also defend the rights of the protesters who share his liberal values.

His balancing act is teetering. Twice in a week, officers mourning their fallen brothers turned their backs on de Blasio, a searing display of contempt and an omen that de Blasio's struggle with police could cripple his attempts to improve the fortunes of those living at the margins of the nation's largest city.

Under former mayors Rudolph Giuliani and Michael Bloomberg, the NYPD largely went unchecked for 20 years. De Blasio was a different voice, who wanted to continue the historic drop in crime but prioritized improving relations between police and communities of color.

The unions heard his campaign promise to curb the use of stop and frisk — a police tactic a federal judge ruled discriminated against minorities — not as a criticism of strategy but rather as an assessment of the men and women of the NYPD.

After the grand jury's decision, de Blasio spoke about cautioning his own son, who is half-black, about contact with police, and he permitted anti-NYPD protesters to march freely. When the two officers were gunned down Dec. 20 by a man who cited Garner as one of his motivations for violence, the unions said de Blasio had "blood on his hands."

4 people found dead in North Texas home

CROWLEY, Texas — Officers responding to a report of a suicide attempt found four people dead inside a North Texas home Sunday afternoon, police said.

Crowley Police Chief Luis Soler said at a news conference Sunday night that a 9-year-old who was inside the home called a relative and told her that a man there was injured after attempting to kill himself. The woman then called 911, Soler said.

When police arrived at the home about four minutes after her call, around 4:15 p.m., they found two women, a man and a female child dead, according to Soler. Officers also found the 9-year-old caller at the scene, apparently physically uninjured.

Surfer survives shark attack off Calif. coast

LOS OSOS, Calif — A man surfing on the Central California coast was dragged under water by a juvenile great white shark and bitten in the hip on Sunday before he could paddle to shore, where he received help from two doctors who happened to be on the beach, a witness said Sunday.

The man in his 50s used the leash cord from his surfboard to make a tourniquet for his leg before he got out of the water, Andrew Walsh told the San Luis Obispo Tribune.

Sony says PlayStation Network back online

Sony says its PlayStation Network is back online after three days of disruptions that began on Christmas.

Christmas.

Heavy traffic might continue to cause problems for customers seeking to play their favorite

games, the company said Sunday.
A group of hackers called Lizard Squad — or someone claiming to speak for it — took credit

for the disruptions.

Smoke in cabin forces

plane to land in Pa.

WILLIAMSPORT, Pa. — A plane traveling from Toronto to Washington made an emergency landing in central Pennsylvania after the crew detected smoke on the flight deck and in the cabin.

Porter Airlines spokesman Brad Cicero said the turboprop landed safely Sunday morning at Williamsport Regional Airport.

Another aircraft was sent to pick up the 66 passengers and fly them to Dulles International Airport.

From The Associated Press



WORLD

Strong quake shakes southern Philippines

MANILA, Philippines - A strong earthquake shook parts of the southern and central Philippines on Monday, frightening people but causing no serious damage or injuries, officials said.

The U.S. Geological Survey

said the earthquake measured magnitude 6.1 and struck at a depth of 23 miles.

Government seismologist Jane Punonghayan said it was centered under the ocean 127 miles northwest of Zamboanga city and was too deep and far from urban areas to cause any damage or in-juries. She said aftershocks were expected.

Greece to hold early general election

ATHENS, Greece - Greek Prime Minister Antonis Samaras says the country will hold early national elections on Jan. 25. after lawmakers failed to elect a new president in a third and final round of voting.

His coalition government's candidate for the presidential post, former European commissioner Stavros Dimas, 73, garnered 168 votes Monday from parliament's 300 seats - short of the 180 votes needed to win

Traffic to Gmail in China cut; agency suspected

BEIJING - Connections to Google Inc.'s popular email service have been blocked in China amid efforts by the government to limit access to the company's services.

Records from Google's Transparency Report show online traffic from China to Gmail dropped to nearly zero on Saturday, although there was a tiny pickup on Monday.

Calls to the regulator, the China Internet Information Office, were unanswered Monday. Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying did not confirm the block but said China welcomes foreign investors who legally conduct business in China.

Google closed its mainland China search engine in 2009, say-ing it would no longer cooperate with the country's censors. That followed hacking attacks traced to China aimed at stealing the company's operating code and breaking into email accounts.

S. Korean officials to be punished over nut flap

SEOUL, South Korea - South Korea's Transport Ministry says four officials will be punished for improper conduct during an investigation into a former Korean Air Lines executive who forced a flight to return over a bag of macadamia nuts.

The ministry said Monday that the punishment could include dismissals, salary reductions or formal reprimands.

Earlier this month, then-Korean Air executive Cho Hyun-ah forced a plane that was preparing to take off in New York to return to the gate and kicked off the chief flight attendant because she was served nuts in a bag, not on a plate.



Rescuers assist a passenger of the Italian-flagged Norman Atlantic in the harbor of Bari, southern Italy, on Monday.

Amid rescues, dozens remain on burning ferry

By Andrea Rosa and Nicole Winfield The Associated Press

BARI Italy - Heliconters defied high winds, stormy seas and darkness Monday to pluck hundreds of passengers from a Greek ferry that caught fire off Albania, as survivors told of a frantic rush to escape the flames and pelting rain. Five people died and dozens remained trapped on board a day after the fire broke out.

Exhausted and cold from their ordeal, 49 passengers reached land Monday in the southern Italian port of Bari, more than 24 hours after fire broke out on a car deck of the ferry making a journey from the Greek port of Patras to Ancona in Italy.

Fewerthan100peopleremained stranded on the smoke-filled vessel adrift in frigid temperatures and rough seas near the Albanian coast. Helicopters worked night and day plucking passengers off the stricken vessel and ferrying them to 10 or so mercantile ships nearby that were summoned to

One Greek man died on Sunday after becoming trapped in a lifeboat chute. Greek Coast Guard spokesman Nikos Lagadianos said four more people were found dead on Monday. Of the 478 passengers and crew aboard the ferry, 391 have been rescued so far.

A Greek truck driver, reached by The Associated Press aboard one of the rescue vessels, described the rescue scene as "a chaos, a panic." He said the fire alarm came after most passengers, alerted by smoke filling their cabins, had gone outside, and that there was no crew in sight to direct passengers.

"Our feet were burning and from the feet up, we were soaked,"

Christos Perlis, 32, told the AP by telephone.

When rescue helicopters arrived, Perlis said, passengers began to panic.

"Everyone there was trampling on each other to get onto the helicopter," said Perlis, who said he and another man tried to impose

"First children, then women and then men. But the men, they started hitting us so they could get on first. They didn't take into consideration the women or the children, nothing," Perlis said. He said he reached safety after jumping into a helicopter basket carrying a girl.

Turkish passenger Saadet Bayhan, speaking to Turkey's NTV television from a rescue ship, confirmed that there were no fire alarms and that passengers woke each other up. "We experienced the Titanic.

The only thing missing was that we didn't sink," she said.

Most evacuees were to be brought to shore later after the rescue was completed, Greek officials said, but one of the cargo ships, the Spirit of Piraeus, left ahead of the pack, reaching Bari just after 6:30 a.m. GMT Monday with 49 survivors aboard. The first to disembark was an injured man wrapped in a yellow, striped blanket and wearing bandages around his bare feet, helped down the ship's ladder by two rescue workers

The fire broke out before dawn Sunday on a car deck of the Italian-flagged Norman Atlantic. carrying 422 passengers and 56 crewmembers. All day and night, passengers huddled on the vessel's upper decks, pelted by rain and hail and struggling to breathe through the thick smoke.

Ruble drops 5 percent as Russian economy shrinks

By Nataliya Vasilyeva The Associated Press

MOSCOW — The Russian currency extended its losses on Monday after a report showed the economy has started shrink-ing in annual terms for the first time since 2009 as the country is buffeted by falling oil prices and Western sanctions.

Meanwhile, the government, which has been scrambling to support the ruble and the economy, announced fresh steps to keep the banks afloat.

The ruble has been one of the world's worst-performing currencies this year and was down another 5 percent on Monday, trading at 56 rubles per dollar in the early afternoon in Moscow, wiping out some of last week's gains.

The fall came as the Economic

Development Ministry issued a report showing the economy shrank by 0.5 percent in November compared with a year earlier. The ministry attributed the yearon-year decline in the economy Russia's first in five years, to a sharp drop in manufacturing and investment.

The economy has been buffeted by a combination of lower prices for the country's crucial oil exports and the impact of Western sanctions.

Stabilizing the ruble is a priority for the country's monetary authorities. The Central Bank in past weeks raised its key interest rate to 17 percent and said it will offer dollar and euro loans to banks so they can help major exporters that need foreign currencies to finance operations.









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From The Associated Press

Ebola lessons painfully learned at great cost

By LENA H. SUN. BRADY DENNIS AND JOEL ACHENBACH The Washington Post

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A year after it began, the Ebola epidemic in West Africa continues to be unpredictable, forcing governments and aid groups to improvise strategies as they chase a virus that is unencumbered by borders or bureaucracy.

The people fighting Ebola are coming up with lists of lessons learned - not only for the current battle, which has killed more than 7,500 people and is far from over, but also for future outbreaks of deadly contagions.

Man vs. microbe is certain to be a recurring narrative in the 21st century. It's a natural consequence of a burgeoning human population. Our vulnerability to new pathogens will not be easily

Here are some of the lessons

Rely on the locals

When Peggy Chilcott looks back on the great Ebola outbreak of 2014, she will picture herself in a remote village in West Africa where the inhabitants feared that outsiders had come to poison

Chilcott. 34. a doctor with the charity group Samaritan's Purse, traveled from Spokane, Wash., to Liberia in November. One day she and two colleagues made a journev by helicopter to a remote village in Gbarpolu County, north of Monrovia. Two people there had tested positive for Ebola.

The villagers were skeptical of the outsiders and their medicines, which included malaria pills. Go away, one man said, "and take your poison with you." Chilcott tried to reassure them by swallowing pills as they watched.

"You can't just blast into a place and expect people to drop every-thing and do what you tell them to do," said David Nabarro, the U.N. special envoy on Ebola. "They have to be utterly convinced your motives are good. They have to be able to share their view with you."

Archie C. Gbessay, a Liberian who is coordinator of the Active Case Finders and Awareness Team in Monrovia, said recently that if foreign intervention and billions of dollars in contributions were all it took to stop the disease, "we should already be celebrating the eradication of Ebola from my

Be sensitive to cultures

Julienne Anoko, an anthropolo-



Family members mourn the death of Isata Kallon, 12, in Freetown.

gist working on the Ebola response in Guinea, faced a situation involving a pregnant woman who had died of Ebola with her dead baby inside her. Tribal custom required that the baby be removed from the womb and buried separately. The doctors forbade the baby's removal, saying such surgery could spread the disease.

Anoko had to find a way to satisfy the family and the medical establishment. She tracked down an 80-year-old ritualist. He put together a culturally acceptable set of rituals that included the sacrifice of a goat and prayers to appease the ancestors.

The people suffering through this epidemic, Anoko said, "have something to say, and it's important to listen to them first, instead of building solutions elsewhere and saying to the community, 'We know your problem; this is the solution."

Slight adjustments help

Many lessons were learned on the fly, in crisis mode, and they amounted to slight adjustments in tactics based on feedback from locals. For example, Western aid workers initially used black body bags for burials in Liberia But white is a traditional color of mourning, especially for Muslims, and Liberians balked. Officials ordered white body bags.

We're all connected

In an increasingly interconnected world, affluent countries have to be aware of — and care about - what's happening in the

poorest.
"This is the poster child for why we should pay attention to fragile states," said Nancy Lindborg, a top official at the U.S. Agency for International Development. "This is a wake-up call. Thank God it was Ebola and not something airborne."

Ken Isaacs, head of Samaritan's Purse, the North Carolina-based Christian missionary organization that has been working in West Africa, argues that the global community cannot merely rely on the World Health Organization, which has a decentralized management structure and got caught flat-footed by Ebola. He would like to see a new structure formed with political leverage, laboratory research capabilities and a global reach.

An ounce of prevention

The year of Ebola showed that it is a lot cheaper and easier to stop a viral outbreak early, before it metastasizes into a full-blown epidemic. But that common-sense notion collides with another one: watching out for emerging diseases and other proactive efforts aren't terribly glamorous.

The epidemic that didn't happen is like the nuclear power plant that didn't have a meltdown — desirable, but not headline-grabbing. That can make such efforts a tough sell, politically.

Ebola surveillance and research is now getting abundant funding, but Ebola isn't necessarily the most dangerous pathogen that humanity could face in the near future.

"We're always chasing what just happened," said Jonna Mazet, a professor of epidemiology and disease ecology at the University of California, Davis.

"If we don't start getting ahead of the curve on pandemics, we're sitting here like victims waiting for the next one," said Peter Daszak, a well-known disease ecologist

Liberia reporting dozens of new cases near border

By Jonathan Paye-Layleh state radio. The Associated Press

MONROVIA, Liberia -Dozens of new Ebola cases have erupted in Liberia, near the border with Sierra Leone, Liberian health officials warned Monday, marking a setback amid recent improvements

The flare-up is due to a number of factors including people going in and out of Liberia and traditional practices such as the washing of bodies, Liberian Assistant Health Minister Tolbert Nyenswah said.

Forty-nine cases were reported in western Grand Cape Mount County between Dec. 1 and Dec. 25, Nyenswah told

"In a very small population, an increase in the number of (Ebola) cases raises high level of concerns that we need to take very seriously [for] people of Liberia and people of Grand Cape Mount, in particular," he

Nearly 3,400 people have died from Ebola in Liberia over the past year, with nearly 8,000 cases total, though health officials say the situation has improved, especially in the capital, Monrovia.

Sierra Leone, in comparison, has now eclipsed Liberia. with more than 9,000 Ebola cases, according to the World Health Organization.

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WORLD

Missing jet brings brash ĂirAsia CEO unwanted attention

The Associated Press

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia - His airline empire began, Tony Fernandes likes to say, with the purchase of a bankrupt company for less than a dollar. Now, after years of growth that made him the king of Asian budget travel, the flamboyant Malaysian businessman is facing the horror of the disappearance of an AirAsia jet with 162 people on board.

Fernandes, who built AirAsia's regional network on cheap fares. a love of the spotlight and occasionally provocative advertising ("There's a new girl in town. She's twice the fun and half the price."), was clearly exhausted by the time he met reporters late Sunday at the airport in Surabava. Indonesia, where the missing flight had taken off.



AirAsia Group CEO Tony Fernandes speaks to the press at Juanda International Airport in Surabaya, Indonesia, on Monday.

"We are very devastated by what has happened. It is unbelievable," he said. In an earlier tweet to his employees, Fernandes said, This is my worst nightmare."

Fernandes pioneered regional low-cost air travel by launching AirAsia in January 2002, growing it from two planes to more than 180 by breaking the dominance of national airlines and making flying affordable for the millions Asians entering the middle class. Today, he has an estimated net worth of \$650 million.

A 50-year-old Malaysian of Indian-Portuguese descent and a serious music buff - he plays keyboards and the drums - Fernandes earned a finance degree in the United Kingdom and rose quickly in the music industry, first at Virgin Group and later at Warner Music International. He was appointed Warner's chief in Malaysia in 1992 at age 28, the youngest person to hold that post.

In many ways, Fernandes' career echoes the empire Richard Branson created at Virgin Group both in terms of how the men love attention and how they have

expanded across industries. From short routes of up to four hours, AirAsia has expanded into long-haul flying through its sister airline, AirAsia X. Through his Tune Group, which owns AirA-sia, Fernandes also started a hotel chain and offers car rental, insurance and credit cards in tieups with banks.
In 2011, Fernandes stepped into

the sports world when he bought a majority stake in Queens Park Rangers, an English Premier League soccer club. Since the disappearance of

Flight 8501, Fernandes has focused on encouraging his staff not to buckle under the pressure.

"Be strong," he told his staff in another Twitter message. "Continue to be the best. Pray hard."

How Flight 8501 is different from Flight 370

SINGAPORE — The disappearance of an AirAsia passenger jet soon after takeoff in-evitably brings back memories of the myster behind Malaysia Airlines Flight 370, which dis-appeared nearly 10 months ago and is yet to be found.

behind Malaysia Airlines Flight 270, which dis-peared nearly 10 months ago and is yet to be found.

Be it is still not known what hap-pened to Airlines Flight 830, Here appear to be no reasons its presumed crash is pened to Airlines Flight 830, Here appear to be no reasons its presumed crash is availtand disaster, whose cause will become apparent only when the wreckage and flight that recorders are recovered. The still become apparent only when the wreckage and flight that recorders are recovered. The still become apparent only when the wreckage and flight had even to the still become apparent only when the wreckage apparent only when the wreckage and flight had been expected to the still become apparent on the still become apparent only the still become apparent only when the still become apparent apparent only the still become apparent only the made of the circumstances leading up to the made of the circumstances leading up to the two events, based on what authorities have are some of the differences between the two events, based on what authorities have which lost contact with ground control in indonesia early Sunday morning, 42 minutes which lost contact with ground control in indonesia early Sunday morning, 42 minutes which lost contact with ground control in 10 May deliberately diverted by someone on board, and suspicions of foul play emerged been no suggested by developed the properties of 10 May deliberately diverted by someone on board, and suspicions of foul play emerged 10 May 10 May

accident.
2) SOUTHERN INDIAN OCEAN, Based on

data "pings" from Flight 370, authorities believe the plane crashed into the southern Indian Ocean, a vast, deep, isolated stretch Indian Ocean, a vast, deep, isolated stretch the plane. The direct indian Ocean, a vast, deep, isolated stretch the plane. The direct indian Ocean, a vast, deep, isolated stretch the plane. The direct indian ocean, a vast, deep, isolated stretch the plane. The direct indian ocean indian oc

with the rest coming from all over the world, only adding to what was already an unprecedented situation.

— The Associated Press



TATAN SYUFLANA/A

Members of Indonesia's Marine Police hold a briefing on board a search-and-rescue craft at Pangkal Pinang port on Sumatra island Monday prior to heading out to sea to search for AirAsia Flight 8501.

Lost plane's request for new path initially denied

By Trisnadi Marjan AND MARGIE MASON The Associated Press

SURABAYA Indonesia - The plane sought permission to climb above threatening clouds. Air traffic control couldn't say yes immediately - there was no room. Six other commercial airliners were crowding the surround-ing airspace, forcing AirAsia Flight 8501 to remain at a lower

Minutes later, the jet carrying 162 people was gone from the radar. No distress signal was issued. It is believed to have crashed into Indonesia's Java Sea on Sunday morning, but broad aerial surveys on Monday turned up no firm evidence of the missing Airbus A320-200.

The plane left Surabaya, Indonesia, but vanished halfway into what should have been a twohour hop to Singapore. Officials on Monday saw little reason to believe the flight met anything but a grim fate.

"Based on the coordinates that we know, the evaluation would be that any estimated crash position is in the sea, and that the hypothesis is the plane is at the bottom of the sea," Indonesia search-andrescue chief Henry Bambang Soelistyo said. Search officials did, however, plan to expand their search efforts onto land on Tuesday.

The last communication from the cockpit to air traffic control was a request by one of the pilots to increase altitude from 32,000 feet to 38,000 feet because of the rough weather. The tower was not able to immediately comply because of the other planes, said Bambang Tjahjono, director of the state-owned company in charge of air-traffic control.

Sarjono Joni, a former pilot with a state-run Indonesian carrier, said the usual course of action when planes run into rough weather is to veer either left or right. A request to climb would most likely come if the plane was experiencing heavy turbulence or otherwise causing serious passenger discomfort, he said.

He added that heavy traffic is not unusual for any given

The twin-engine, single-aisle plane was last seen on radar four minutes after the final communication from the cockpit.

Search-and-rescue crews were looking for the plane with at least 15 ships, seven aircraft and four helicopters, national search-and-rescue spokesman Jusuf Latif said. Most are Indonesian but Singapore, Malaysia and Australia have contributed planes, and a ship and aircraft from Thailand were awaiting clearance from Indonesia's Foreign Ministry.

An Associated Press photographer flew in a C-130 transport carrier with Indonesia's Air Force for 10 hours Monday over a large section of the search area between Kalimantan and Belitung. The flight was bumpy and rainy at times. It hovered low at 1,500 feet, giving clear visibility to waves, ships and fishermen, but there was no sign of the plane.

The disappearance and suspected crash caps an astonishingly tragic year for air travel in Southeast Asia, and Malaysia in particular, Malaysia-based AirAsia's loss comes on top of the stillunexplained disappearance of Malaysia Airlines Flight 370 in March with 239 people aboard and the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 in July over Ukraine, which killed all 298 passengers and crew.

"Until today, we have never lost a life." AirAsia group CEO Tony Fernandes, who founded the low-cost carrier in 2001, told reporters in Jakarta airport. "But I think that any airline CEO who says he can guarantee that his airline is 100 percent safe is not accurate."

Nearly all the passengers and crew are Indonesians, who are frequent visitors to Singapore, particularly on holidays.

Ruth Natalia Puspitasari, who would have turned 26 on Monday, was among them. Her father, Suyanto, sat with his wife, who was puffy-eyed and coughing, near the family crisis center at Surabaya's airport.

Suvanto remembers the concern his daughter showed for the families of the MH370 tragedy. Puspitasari once told him how sad it must be for the victims relatives who were left waiting for their loved ones with no certainty.

"Now she is gone in the missing plane, and we should face this sorrow, I can't believe it," he said, tears rolling down his cracked cheeks. "This is too hard to be faced." Flight 8501 had been airborne

for about 42 minutes when it lost contact. The plane had an Indonesian captain, Iryanto, who uses one name, and a French co-pilot, five cabin crew members and 155 nassengers including 16 children and one infant, the airline said in

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

BioPark Zoo mourns loss of ocelot

ALBUQUERQUE

— The Albuquerque
BioPark Zoo is mourning the
death of one of its animals.

The Albuquerque Journal reported that Beamer, a 20-year-old male ocelot, had to be euthanized Tuesday.

Zoo officials said the feline

Zoo officials said the feline had become ill after undergoing kidney failure. Zookeepers said Beamer had stopped eating and drinking.

Zoo manager Lynn Tupa said Beamer had a long life compared with those of his counterparts in the wild. Beamer was the eightholdest ocelot in captivity in the

Man charged with illegally breeding dogs

WAUKEGAN — A Waukegan man has been charged with illegally breeding and selling bulldogs after an undercover officer bought one of the puppies for \$1,500.

John Bass, 28, was charged with violating a city ordinance that regulates home breeding businesses. It's intended to prevent puppy mill-like operations.

Waukegan Police Sgt. Cory Kelly said the city's animal control department had received complaints about a resident selling puppies on Facebook and Craigslist. Kelly pretended to be an interested buyer, and said Bass drew up paperwork for the sale. He was arrested after the officer gave him \$1,500 for the puppy.

Bass and his wife said they didn't know breeding and selling the puppies was illegal.

Police said the animal control department took ownership of the puppies.

Residents alarmed over change of foghorns

YORK—Hundreds of New Englanders are sounding the alarm over a Coast Guard plan to convert old-style foghorns to new technology.

The Coast Guard is converting Maine and New Hampshire foghorns that are automated to activate when there is fog. It says newer technology that mariners activate via marine radios is safer and more cost-effective. So far, the Coast Guard has changed seven foghorns and plans to convert 18 more.

Residents in some Maine towns are petitioning to stop the change. Tom Bradbury, of Kennebunkport, said the older, more frequent foghorns bring the "sense that someone is on guard."

The converted foghorns range from Portsmouth, N.H., to Maine's Mistake Island, about 50 miles from Canada.

Man, 77, abandons his solo sail around globe

ST. AUGUSTINE — A 77-year-old St. Augustine man has abandoned his quest to become the fastest and oldest person to sail solo around the world after his main sail tore and

THE CENSUS

\$25

The cost for an individual "Hike Safe" card that New Hampshire Fish and Game officials are hoping will alleviate some of the agency's budget woes. The voluntary cards on sale for 2015 indemnify hikers from liability for any rescue costs due to negligence and are designed to help offset the agency's search-and-rescue costs, which typically are about \$350,000 per year. A family card costs \$35.





BRENNAN LINSLEY/AP

World in white

A woman skis on fresh snow past a residential neighborhood Friday in Boulder, Colo.

could not be repaired at sea.

On Christmas Day, Stanley Paris posted on his blog that the sail's failure required him to abandon the journey he began on Nov. 9.

Paris said he is heading to Cape Town, South Africa, for repairs. He was trying to sail his 63-foot Kiwi Spirit — a boat powered by wind and sun — from Bermuda to Bermuda in 150 days to set a new record.

App aimed at reducing deaths in grain bins

BLOOMINGTON — A new app could help reduce the number of fatal grain bin entrapments that occur in Illinois

Illinois.

The Illinois Corn Marketing Board and the Grain and Feed Association of Illinois teamed up to create an app that will locate the nearest grain rescue tube. The tubes can be placed around a person who has fallen into a grain bin to help prevent them from drowning or being crushed by grain.

John Lee, director of the Safety, Health Environmental Services Program for the Grain and Feed Association of Illinois, said the app is "another tool in the toolbox if an unfortunate situation occurs."

Officials OK rumble strips, irking bicyclists

SD SIOUX FALLS — A series of small divots along the side of a South Dakota highway intended to help prevent car crashes are irking bicyclists. The Minnehaha County Com-

mission approved 7.5 miles of new rumble strips on County Highway 151, the Argus Leader reported. Rumble strips are often used

Rumble strips are often used as a safety feature on highways and interstates. Whenever a tire rolls over a rumble strip, the resulting loud noise is designed to startle drivers so they steer their vehicles back onto the road.

Cyclist Larry Hayes, of Sioux Falls, said the grooving on the Highway 151's narrow shoulder leaves little room for cyclists to ride on the remaining smooth pathway.

Police: Man attacked brother with machete

NJ

CAMDEN — Aggravated assault charges have

been filed against a southern New Jersey man who is suspected of attacking his brother with a machete last week.

Camden County police said Adrian Mendarte, 51, of Camden, also faces weapons charges stemming from the attack. They have not said what provoked the incident.

Mendarte was arrested as he tried to enter his home moments after the attack occurred. Authorities said they recovered the machete he is suspected of using.

The victim was treated at a hospital for undisclosed injuries and later released.

Mendarte's bail was set at \$50,000.

Teen suspected in hotel room blaze

SALT LAKE CITY

— A teenager has been arrested on suspicion of setting fire to his room at a luxury hotel in downtown Salt Lake City.

Fire officials said Francisco Castillo, 19, told investigators he had smoked marijuana Thursday night and decided to set his Little America Hotel room on fire early Friday. He said he was staying alone in the room.

Weber County sheriff's deputies took Castillo into custody Friday night at his home in West Haven. He was booked into jail for investigation of first-degree arson.

More than 100 guests were forced to evacuate their rooms, but no injuries were reported.

Hearse stolen ahead of funeral service

LOS ANGELES — A pastor's wife said a hearse was stolen from outside a Southern California church ahead of a funeral service.

The Los Angeles Times reported that the hearse was idling outside Ebenezer Baptist Church in South Los Angeles while the funeral director arranged flowers for Saturday morning services.

Shirley Little, the pastor's wife, said the director called ministry friends for help when he saw the hearse was missing.

Little said family members driving to the funeral had been notified and stopped the hearse four blocks from the church. Police detained the man, whose mental condition will be evaluated.

From wire reports



Fugana Shaffar Crassward

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Today's Cryptoquip Clue: R equals Y



Reality ratings bite After years of success, unscripted shows suffer from viewer disinterest

By SCOTT COLLINS Los Angeles Times

ust a few years ago, underemployed TV writers were complaining that reality programming was taking over their

Now the scribes are having their revenge: Unscripted programming is mired in an unexpected slump.

Onetime smashes such as "Survivor" and "Dancing with the Stars" are drooping with age. Coca-Cola recently wrapped up its 13year sponsorship of "American Idol" after Fox's singing hit plummeted in the ratings last season. NBC's own singing show, "The Voice," saw its season finale drop nearly 10 percent this month.

And what's worse, no new hits are taking their place. Fox bet the farm early this season on "Ûtopia," a voyeuristic series in which a group of isolated "pioneers" was observed trying to create a new society. Viewers yawned, and the network eventually canceled the program, for a loss that insiders pegged at more than \$50 million. ABC drew disappointing results last summer with its gimmicky singing show "Rising Star."

"Reality TV was supposed to be a long-term fix to the problems of television, but that optimism was misguided," said Jeffrey McCall, a media studies professor at DePauw University in Greencastle, Ind. "Program executives overestimated the true value of the commodity and drove the genre into the ground."

Even cable networks, a longtime proving ground for the genre, are seeing diminishing returns. A&E's "Duck Dynasty" ratings have plunged, even though they are still high by cable standards. TLC this fall quickly shelved its hit "Here Comes Honey Boo Boo" after matriarch Mama June was accused of dating a sex offender, but viewership had already declined sharply last summer. And this fall, AMC largely abandoned a three-year foray into unscripted programming, deciding to return its primary focus on its signature scripted series such as "Mad Men" and "The Walking Dead."

What's the problem? Industry observers pin the blame on various factors. Too many copycat shows. Too many airings of the few hit shows out there ("Idol," which once aired as many as three times a week, will get cut to one night per week for this winter's Season 14). Too few truly original concepts.

Of course, there are still plenty of reality series to go around. In fact, some TV executives point out that the broadcasters probably wouldn't be able to stay in business without unscripted series. That's because, as overall network viewership has declined due to competition from cable and the Internet, ad income has stagnated.

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Reality TV was supposed to be a long-term fix to the problems of television, but that optimism was misguided. 9

Jeffrey McCall Media studies professor at DePauw University

Thus, reality is a cheap way to fill prime time. Take "The Voice." Despite its ratings fall-

off, the singing contest remains one of the top shows on TV. Its season finale delivered 12. million total viewers, according to Nielsen. That was off 8 percent compared with the December 2013 finale, but those kinds of num-bers still easily vault "The Voice" into the top 10. Then there's the No. 2 reality series, "Survivor," which has proved an enduring hit for CBS; next year, it heads

into its 30th edition. 'These are enormous franchises that, frankly, don't come along that often. Every six or seven years, a megaformat comes along, said Paul Telegdy, who oversees "The Voice" as NBC Enter-

tainment's president

late-night program-

alternative and

After years of success,

ming. "I don't think there's anything wrong with the reality business.

That might be true in the long run. But there's no question that the genre has stumbled lately. And there are few signs of the gold-rush mentality that surrounded reality TV a decade or so

Broadcasters are scheduling fewer unscripted series than they used to. This fall, a total of 13 hours per week were devoted to reality shows collectively on ABC, CBS, Fox and NBC. That's a steep drop from 20 hours as recently as 2011.

Without a strong reality lineup, the already-sobering prospect for broadcasters can look downright perilous. And that's something that could get the attention even of TV writers who still blame "American Idol" and "Survivor" for their woes.

Networks "are in free fall, and they need to at least give people a reason to watch their air," says Tom Nunan, a producer and former president at the network UPN (now the CW) who teaches at UCLA. "The scripted shows are not







'Hobbit' top draw at theaters; 'Interview' a hit online

The Associated Press

Audiences had their pick of genres over the Christmas weekend, but despite a host of fresh arrivals, splashy holiday fare like "Unbroken" and "Into the Woods" proved no match for "The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies.

The Seth Rogen comedy "The Interview," meanwhile, wowed with \$15 million from its 2 million online rentals and

The final installment in Peter Jackson's trilogy marched to the top spot once again with an estimated \$41.4 million take across the weekend, according to studio estimates

The World War II epic "Unbroken" took second place with \$31.7 million from the weekend, bringing its domestic total to \$47.3 million from its first four days in theaters.

Disney's musical "Into the Woods, boasting a star-packed cast and a PG rating, came in a close third with \$31 million, and \$46.1 million across the four days. It replaced "Mamma Mia" as the biggest opening for a screen adaptation of a Broadway musical ever.



Emily Blunt, left, and James Corden star in "Into the Woods."

The rest of the top five was populated by holdovers "Night at the Museum: Secret of the Tomb" and "Annie," which earned \$20.6 million and \$16.6 million, respectively, in their second weekend in theaters.

Sony's "The Interview," which earned \$15 million from online rentals and purchases through Saturday, also took in \$2.8 million from 331 theaters since its opening on Thursday. \$1.8 million of that came from the weekend

"I'm so grateful that the movie found its way into theaters, and I'm thrilled that people actually went out and saw it," said writer, director and star Rogen in a statement. Sony initially called off the release after major theater chains dropped the comedy depicting the assassination of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un due to threats. But with President Barack Obama, among others, criticizing the decision, Sony officials changed their minds.

Other weekend debuts include the \$25 million crime drama "The Gambler," which took seventh place with a middling \$9.3 million. "Big Eyes" earned only \$4.4 million grants. million over the four-day stretch. The haul is a career low for Tim Burton.

In limited release, Clint Eastwood's factbased Iraq war drama "American Sniper" opened in four locations, taking in a phenomenal \$610,000. The staggering \$152, 510 per-theater average is second this year

only to "The Grand Budapest Hotel."

The Martin Luther King Jr. drama "Selma," meanwhile, opened in 19 locations to \$590,000 over the three-day weekend for a solid \$31,053 per-theater average. The film expands nationwide on Jan. 9.

Other news

- Grand Ole Opry legend Little Jimmy Dickens, 94, has been hospitalized with an undisclosed illness. Dickens, who is 4-foot-11, has performed on the Opry almost continuously since 1948. He became an Opry member in 1948 and was elected to the Country Music Hall of Fame in 1983.
- Comedian Chris Rock has filed for divorce from his wife, a statement from his representative confirmed Sunday. Rock and philanthropist Malaak Compton-Rock had been married for 19 years and have two daughters, Lola Simone, 12, and Zahra Savannah, 10.
- Alicia Keys gave birth to son Genesis Ali Dean early Dec. 28. It's baby number two for the Grammy-winning musician and her husband, producer-rapper Swizz Beatz, who are also parents to 4-year-old
- Renowned jazz clarinetist Buddy De-Franco, who led the way on his instrument in the transition between the swing and bebop eras, died Dec. 24 in Panama City, Fla., at the age of 91, his family said.

SHIFTING GEARS



First US-built Mercedes is good on mileage, not so much on controls

By Mark Phelan Detroit Free Press

The 2015 Mercedes-Benz C300 4M attic comes tantalizingly close to setting a new standard for small luxury sedans, but a couple of gaffes by the product planning gurus at Mercedes headquarters in Stuttgart relegate it to the middle of a pack of fine competitors like the Audi A4, BMW 3-series and Cadillac ATS.

Prices for the C-class sedan start at \$40,400 for an all-wheeldrive 4Matic model with a 241-hp 2.0L turbocharged four-cylinder engine. The C400 rear-drive comes with a 329-hp twin-turbo 3.0L V6 and starts at \$48,590. All C-classes have a seven-speed automatic transmission.

Mercedes expects to add a rear-drive C300 priced at \$38,400 in the first quarter of 2015. Twodoor C-class coupes are available, but they still use the old platform, not the 2015 sedan's more mod-

ern engineering.

I tested a C300 4Matic with a stunning interior, power sunroof, Burmester audio, blind spot alert and a sport package that combined functional upgrades like perforated front brake discs with cosmetics like a black AMG headliner. It cost \$49,870. All prices exclude destination charges.

The new C-class platform is about 3.7 inches longer and 1.6 inch wider than the 2014 sedan. Despite that growth, the car is 200 pounds lighter than its pre-decessor. About 50 percent of the body shell is aluminum, compared with less than 10 percent of the old car. The stiff, light body contributes to fuel economy and a quiet, comfortable ride.

The 2015 C300 is nearly the same size as the less expensive CLA250 sedan Mercedes intro-

2015 Mercedes-Benz C300 4Matic



All-wheel-drive five-passenger luxury sedan. Price as tested: \$49,670 (excluding destination charge). Base price: \$40,400. Reasons to buy: Fuel economy, interior look and feel. Shortcomings: No voice recognition for phone; intermittent electronic fault.

EPA fuel economy ratings: 23 m.p.g. city/31 highway/27 combined. Premium gasoline. Engine: 2.0L turbocharged 16valve four-cylinder. Power: 241 hp @ 5,500 rpm;

273 lb-ft of torque 1,300-4,000 rpm.

Transmission: Seven-speed automatic.

SOURCES: Fueleconomy.gov; Autotrader.com

duced last year, which starts at \$29,900 for a front-wheel-drive model. The C300 is 2.2 inches longer and has 2.0 cubic feet more passenger space, according to EPA measurements. The C300 has noticeably more rear headroom and a comfortable, accommodating front seat. Both cars have small rear door openings and limited rear legroom.

The 2015 C-class' passenger compartment is smaller than the Audi A4, Acura TLX, BMW 328i, Cadillac ATS and Infiniti Q50. It's about the same size as the Lexus

IS. The C-class' 12.8 cubic-foot trunk tops all but the BMW and Infiniti.

The C300 4Matic's EPA fuel economy rating of 24 m.p.g. in the city, 31 on the highway and 27 combined beats the competition by as much as 4 m.p.g. in the key combined figure.

The 2.0L turbo's output is lower than the comparable A4, ATS and the Q50 and TLX's larger V6s, but performance is satisfactory. Mercedes' reliable seven-speed shifts quickly and smoothly.

The styling is unobtrusive. The short rear deck is reminiscent of the Infinit Q50. LED lights help offset that and give the C300 a visual identity.
The ride leans more toward

luxury than sportiness. Even with the optional sport suspension, the test car pillowed rough roads. The speed-sensitive steering is balanced and responsive, with good on-center feel.

The interior is stunning, with

The interior is stunning, with the best design and materials ever in a small Mercedes. Aluminum air vents, buttons and switches look and feel terrific. The test car also had cranberry red leather upholstery and soft covers on the upper dash and doors.

The controls are less satisfying. The car had voice recognition for its Garmin navigation. but not for phone calls. To select a name from my contacts or dial a number, I had to use either a touch pad or a dial in the center console, either of which required me looking at a display screen rather than watching the road. That's an unacceptable distraction, particularly in a car whose competitors offer excellent voice recognition. The C300 gets full voice-rec only if you shell out \$2,690 for the optional Comand multimedia system. I found the



Mercedes-Ren

The C-class sedan's interior is stunning, with the best design and

touch pad difficult to use in a moving vehicle for other functions as well.

The audio volume control suf-

materials ever in a small Mercedes.

fered from an intermittent fault. It ceased to work frequently when playing CDs. The problem did not occur with other inputs like radio, iPod and streaming audio.

Those are surprising and relatively elementary oversights in what's otherwise a very good car. Don't be surprised if Mercedes remedies them quickly and the 2015 C300 becomes even more appealing.

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US MILITARY AND DIPLOMATIC SALES IN GERMANY & ITALY

PAGE 16 第3種郵便物設可 ·STARS AND STRIPES·

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS' TOP 10 NEWS STORIES







By David Crary | The Associated Press ■ AP photos

he police killings of unarmed blacks in Ferguson, Mo., and elsewhere - and the investigations and turnultuous protests they inspired — was the top news story of 2014, according to The Associated Press' annual poll of U.S. editors and news directors. In a year crowded with dramatic and often wrenching news developments around the world, the No. 2 story was the devastating outbreak of Ebola in West Africa, followed by the conflict in Iraq and Syria fueled by the brutal actions of Islamic State militants. Among the 85 voters casting ballots, first-place votes were spread among 15 stories. The

Ferguson entry received 22 first-place votes, Ebola 11 and the Islamic State story 12. The voting was conducted before the announcement that the United States and Cuba were re-

establishing diplomatic relations and Sony Pictures' decision to withdraw its film "The Interview" in the wake of computer hacking and threats.

Last year's top story was the glitch-plagued rollout of President Barack Obama's health care overhaul, followed by the Boston Marathon bombing. The continuing saga of "Obamacare" made this year's Top 10 as well, coming in fifth.

The first AP top-stories poll was conducted in 1936, when editors chose the abdication of Britain's King Edward VIII.

Here are 2014's top 10 stories, in order:

POLICE KII I INGS

Some witnesses said 18-year-old Michael Brown had his hands up in surrender, others said he was making a charge. But there was no dispute he was unarmed and shot dead by a white police officer in Ferguson. In New York City, another unarmed black, Fric Garner, was killed after a white officer out him in a chokehold during an arrest for unauthorized cigarette sales. After grand juries opted not to indict the officers, protests erupted across the country, punctuated by chants of "Hands up, don't shoot" and "I can't breathe." In both cases, federal officials launched investigations.

EBOLA OUTBREAK

The first wave of Fhola deaths, early in the year, attracted little notice. By March, the World Health Organization was monitoring the outbreak. By midsummer, it was the worst Ebola epidemic on record, with a death toll now approaching 7,000, mostly in Liberia. Sierra Leone and Guinea. A Liberian man with the disease died at a Dallas hospital, followed by a few other cases involving U.S. health workers, sparking worries about the readiness of the U.S. health system.

ISLAMIC STATE

Militant fighters from the Islamic State group startled the world with rapid, brutal seizures of territory in Iraq and Syria. The U.S. and its allies responded with airstrikes, hoping that Iraqi and Kurdish forces on the ground could retake captured areas. Revulsion toward the Islamic State intensified as it broadcast videos of its beheadings of several Western hostages.

ELECTIONS

For months, political oddsmakers sought to calculate if Republicans had a chance to gain control of the U.S. Senate. It turned out there was no suspense — the Republicans won 54 of the Senate's 100 seats, expanded its already strong majority in the House of Representatives, and gained at the state level, where Republicans now hold 31 governorships.

OBAMACARE

Millions more Americans signed up to be covered under Obama's health care initiative, but controversy about "Obamacare" raged on. Criticism from Republicans in Congress was relentless, many Republican-governed states balked at participation, and opinion polls suggested most Americans remained skeptical about the program.





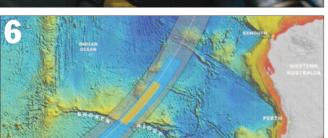
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MALAYSIA AIRLINES **MYSTERY**

En route from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing, Malaysia Airlines Flight 370 disappeared on March 8 with 239 people on board. In the weeks that followed, aircraft, ships and searchers from two-dozen countries mobilized to look in vain for the wreckage on the Indian Ocean floor. To date, there's no consensus as to why the plane vanished.

IMMIGRATION

Frustrated by an impasse in Congress. Obama took executive actions in November to curb deportations for many immigrants living the U.S. illegally. Republican leaders in the House and Senate pledged efforts to block the president's moves. Prospects for reform legislation were dimmed earlier in the year by the influx of unaccompanied Central American minors arriving at the U.S. border, causing shelter overloads and case backlogs.

TURMOIL IN UKRAINE

A sometimes bloody revolt that toppled President Viktor Yanukovych in February triggered a chain of events that continued to roil Ukraine as the year drew to a close. Russia, worried that Ukraine would tilt increasingly toward the West, annexed the Crimean peninsula in March and backed an armed separatist insurgency in coal-rich eastern regions of Ukraine. The U.S. and its allies responded with sanctions against Russia.

GAY MARRIAGE

Due to a wave of federal court rulings, 19 more
U.S. states began allowing same-sex marriages, raising the total to 35 states encompassing about 64 percent of the population. Given that one U.S. court of appeals bucked the trend by upholding state bans on gay marriage, there was widespread expectation that the U.S. Supreme Court will take up the issue and make a national ruling.

SCANDAL The Department of Veterans Affairs became embroiled in a nationwide scandal over allegations of misconduct and cover-ups. Several senior officials were fired or forced to resign, including VA Secretary Eric Shinseki. At the heart

of the scandal was the VA hospital in

Phoenix: allegations surfaced that veter-

ans died while awaiting treatment there.

BUSINESS/WEATHER

Battered Atlantic City eager for 2015

By Wayne Parry The Associated Press

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. — Few people are more eager to see the clock strike midnight on Dec. 31 than Atlantic City casino executives and the thousands of workers who still have iobs there.

Four of the resort's 12 casinos shut down during 2014 (and a fifth narrowly escaped with a last-minute financing deal just before Christmas), 8,000 workers lost their jobs and casino revenue continued its eight-year plunge.

Several major developments are expected in 2015 that will help shape Atlantic City's future, including the outcome of state efforts to help the struggling resort town, a decision on whether PokerStars can join New Jersey's Internet gambling market, the fate of the former Revel casino and a ramped-up push for a state-wide referendum on whether casinos should be allowed in other parts of the state.

"It's got to be better than the

year we just had given that we had four closings. In that regard, the worst is behind us," said Tony Rodio, president of the Tropicana Casino and Resort. "But there's certainly a lot of uncertainty with the tax situation and the state legislation, and about market conditions. I'd forecast a better year, but still cloudy."

Kevin Ortzman, president of the Casino Association of New Jersey, said Atlantic City took some bitter but necessary medicine this year.

"Atlantic City experienced big changes in 2014, changes that were very difficult but nonetheless necessary for the greater good of the entire region," he said.

The biggest question heading into 2015: Is the bleeding over? Casino executives and analysts say the remaining eight casinos have a better chance of success now that the market has conracted; "right-sizing" was a frequently used term in 2014 as The Atlantic Club, Showboat, Revel and Trump Plaza closed. In No-

vember, the eight remaining casinos saw their revenue increase by 11.5 percent compared with November 2013.

But it's too soon to sound the all-clear signal. Gary Loveman, president of Caesars Entertainment, seemed to put Bally's on notice in October, saying, "We need to make money there."

Wall Street firm Fitch Ratings predicts Atlantic City's casino revenue will dip to \$2.6 billion this year (from \$2.86 billion in 2013) and will decline further to \$2.5 billion in 2015.

Sometime in 2015, the state Division of Gaming Enforcement is expected to decide whether to let PokerStars, the world's largest poker website, into New Jersey's online gambling market. The process has been complicated by the company's past legal troubles, but a new owner, Amaya Gaming, and personnel changes are aimed at getting a New Jersey license.

PokerStars, with its huge player following, could breathe new life into the state's Internet gambling market, which took in only about a tenth of the \$1 billion many had forecast for its first year of operation. It also would give a boost to Resorts Casino Hotel, which has done without an Internet component for a year while waiting for PokerStars to be approved.

The fate of the former Revel casino hotel remains unclear as well. A Canadian company reached a deal to buy it from bankruptcy court for \$110 million but pulled out over a dispute with bondholders over debt from the construction of the casino's costly power plant. A court hearing on a possible sale to the runner-up, Florida developer Glenn Straub, is set for Jan. 5.

State officials are considering numerous tax and financial aid packages for Atlantic City's casino and municipal finances, but none has been enacted yet. More are expected to emerge next month from the third summit on the city's future convened by Gov. Chris Christie.

EXCHANGE RATES

Euro costs (Dec. 30)\$1.2522
Dollar buys (Dec. 30)€0.7986
British pound (Dec. 30)\$1.59
Japanese yen (Dec. 30) 117.00
South Korean won (Dec. 30)1,071.00
Commercial rates
Bahrain (Dinar)3771

Japanese yen (Dec. 30) 117.00
South Korean won (Dec. 30)1,071.00
Commercial rates
Bahrain (Dinar)3771
British pound\$1.5535/0.6437
Canada (Dollar)1.1624
China (Yuan)6.2221
Denmark (Krone) 6.1025
Egypt (Pound)7.1520
Euro\$1.2195/0.8200
Hong Kong (Dollar)7.7587
Hungary (Forint)258.03
Israel (Shekel)3.9134
Japan (Yen)120.66
Kuwait (Dinar)2929
Norway (Krone)7.4335
Philippines (Peso)44.74
Poland (Zloty)3.53
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)3.7532
Singapore (Dollar)1.3237
South Korea (Won)1098.70
Switzerland (Franc)9866
Thailand (Baht)32.97
Turkey (Lira)2.3215
(Military exchange rates are those
available to customers at military banking
facilities in the country of issuance
for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the
Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For
nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e.,
purchasing British pounds in Germany),
check with your local military banking

check with your local military panking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencia to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	3.25
Discount rate	
Federal funds market rate	
3-month bill	
30-year bond	2.82

WEATHER OUTLOOK

TUESDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST KAZAKHSTAN RUSSIA GEORGIA AZERBAIJAN Caspian Sea 52/32 Baghdad a: 69/45 IRAN Kandahar 51/33 IRAO Kuwait City 75/48 PAKISTAN Rivadh 72/64 OQA Doha U.A.E. OMAN SAUDI ARABIA Arabian Sea **Djibouti**YEMEN





Tuesday's US temperature

City	Hi	Lo	Wthr	Chattanooga	49	30	PCldv	Fort Wavne	28	14	Snow	Louisville	38	23	PCldv	Pocatello	10	-9	Clr	Sioux City	2	-9	Clr
Abilene, Tex	35	24	Cldv	Chevenne	-3	-18	Snow	Fresno	49	28	PCIdv	Lubbock	26	16	Cldv	Portland, Maine	24	14	Clr	Sioux Falls	0	-10	Clr
Akron, Ohio	29	16	Cldv	Chicago	21	9	PCldv	Goodland	5	-9	Snow	Macon	63	40	PCldv	Portland, Ore.	29	21	Clr	South Bend	26	14	Cldv
Albany, N.Y.	28	15	PCIdv	Cincinnati	32	18	PCIdv	Grand Junction	25	9	Cldv	Madison	14	1	Cĺr	Providence	34	20	PCldv	Spokane	14	2	Clr
Albuquerque	28	14	Clr	Cleveland	27	18	Cldv	Grand Rapids	23	13	Cldv	Medford	34	21	Cldv	Pueblo	7	-13	Snow	Springfield.III	26	9	Snow
Allentown, Pa.	37	22	PCldv	Colorado Springs	4	-11	Snow	Great Falls	-3	-3	Clr	Memphis	44	27	PCldv	Raleigh-Durham	42	28	Cldv	Springfield,Mo	31	10	Snow
Amarillo	18	7	Cldv	Columbia.S.C.	53	35	Cldv	Green Bay	12	-3	Clr	Miami Beach	82	69	PCldv	Rapid City	2	-11	Clr	Syracuse	28	18	Snow
Anchorage	34	34	Cldv	Columbus.Ga.	63	39	PCldv	Greensboro, N.C.	41	27	Cldv	Midland-Odessa	30	22	Cldv	Reno	28	14	Snow	Tallahassee	68	50	PCldv
Asheville	44	28	Cldv	Columbus,Ohio	31	17	PCIdv	Harrisburg	36	23	Cldv	Milwaukee	17	6	PCldv	Richmond	42	26	Cldv	Tampa	77	61	Cldy
Atlanta	57	35	PCldv	Concord.N.H.	24	14	Clr	Hartford Spofld	32	16	PCIdv	Mpls-St Paul	6	-6	Cĺr	Roanoke	38	26	Cldv	Toledo	27	16	Cldy
Atlantic City	41	22	Cldy	Corpus Christi	61	47	Cldy	Helena	0	-11	Clr	Missoula	4	-8	Clr	Rochester	25	18	Snow	Topeka	18	10	Snow
Austin	51	35	Cldy	Dallas-Ft Worth	42	27	Cldy	Honolulu	82	66	PCIdy	Mobile	62	37	PCldy	Rockford	17	6	PCldy	Tucson	69	43	PCldv
Baltimore	41	26	Cldy	Dayton	30	14	PCldy	Houston	56	37	Cldy	Montgomery	60	35	PCldy	Sacramento	54	33	Clr	Tulsa	34	17	Cldy
Baton Rouge	58	36	PCldy	Daytona Beach	75	58	Cldy	Huntsville	46	28	Cldy	Nashville	42	25	Clr	St Louis	30	13	Snow	Tupelo	48	26	Cldy
Billings	-2	-12	Snow	Denver	0	-14	Snow	Indianapolis	30	12	Cldy	New Orleans	59	42	PCldy	St Petersburg	75	62	Cldy	Waco	45	29	Cldy
Birmingham	49	30	Cldy	Des Moines	11	3	PCldy	Jackson, Miss.	51	30	Cldy	New York City	35	23	PCldy	St Thomas	86	75	Clr	Washington	42	29	Cldy
Bismarck	0	-7	Clr	Detroit	26	16	Cldy	Jacksonville	69	52	Cldy	Newark	38	22	PCldy	Salem,Ore.	32	16	Clr			67	
Boise	22	4	Cldy	Duluth	0	-7	Clr	Juneau	31	29	Cldy	Norfolk,Va.	41	30	Cldy	Salt Lake City	19	3	Clr	W. Palm Beach Wichita	18	6/	Cldy
Boston	33	20	PCldy	El Paso	45	28	PCldy	Kansas City	18	3	Cldy	North Platte	3	-16	Clr	San Angelo	38	27	Cldy		36	4	Cldy
Bridgeport	36	17	PCldy	Elkins	31	17	Cldy	Key West	78	71	PCldy	Oklahoma City	31	13	Cldy	San Antonio	55	37	Cldy	Wichita Falls		17	PCldy
Brownsville	71	59	Cldy	Erie	26	20	Snow	Knoxville	47	27	Cldy	Omaha	7	-5	Clr	San Diego	62	51	Cldy	Wilkes-Barre	31	19	
Buffalo	26	17	Snow	Eugene	31	15	Clr	Lake Charles	58	36	PCldy	Orlando	78	60	Cldy	San Francisco	53	39	Clr	Wilmington, Del.	40	25	Cldy
Burlington,Vt.	21	7	PCldy	Evansville	36	18	Cldy	Lansing	23	12	Cldy	Paducah	39	19	Cldy	San Jose	55	36	Clr	Yakima	21	8	Clr
Caribou,Maine	- 4	-4	Clr	Fairbanks	23	5	Cldy	Las Vegas	48	34	PCldy	Pendleton	17	3	Clr	Santa Fe	21	10	Clr	Youngstown	29	16	Cldy
Casper	-3	-20	Clr	Fargo	-2	-8	Clr	Lexington	37	23	Clr	Peoria	23	8	Cldy	St Ste Marie	15	7	Snow				
Charleston, S.C.	59	39	Cldy	Flagstaff	36	20	PCldy	Lincoln	8	-4	Clr	Philadelphia	39	26	Cldy	Savannah	63	44	Cldy	National temp			emes
Charleston,W.Va.	35	24	Cldy	Flint	24	12	Cldy	Little Rock	44	26	PCldy	Phoenix	64	45	PCldy	Seattle	35	24	Clr	Hi: Sun., 84, Melbo			
Charlotte, N.C.	46	31	Cldy	Fort Smith	43	26	Clr	Los Angeles	60	41	Cldy	Pittsburgh	31	17	Cldy	Shreveport	49	27	PCldy	Lo: Sun., -22, at Cr	ested	Butte	, Colo.

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Governors may not have edge in 2016 races

By Jonathan Zimmerman

n 1947, U.S. historian Wilfred E. Binkley took stock of the 13 men who had been president since the end of the Civil War and reached a stark conclusion: Governorship was "a train-ing school for successful presidents." The seven ex-governors on the list - including both Roosevelts, Theodore and Franklin were far more effective chief executives than the six others.

New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie said pretty much the same thing during the Republican Governors Association meeting last month. "We're better at it," Christie told his fellow state leaders. "The American people are done with the experiment of having somebody [as president] who's never run anything before." He was preaching to the choir. The list of potential 2016 GOP presidential candidates is dominated by governors. Alongside Christie, there's John Kasich (Ohio), Scott Walker (Wisconsin), Bobby Jindal (Louisiana), Mike Pence (Indiana) and Rick Scott (Florida). And don't forget Florida's former Gov. Jeb Bush and Arkansas ex-Gov. Mike Huckabee, who are considering presidential runs as well.

But if you look across our nation's whole history, it's hardly clear that former governors make the best presidents. The ranks of governor-turned-presidents include not just the Roosevelts, after all, but also Grover Cleveland, Calvin Coolidge and Jimmy Carter.

Governors' fate during presidential elections has ebbed and flowed, reflecting shifts in how Americans think about government itself. Before the American Revolution, colonial governors were appointed by the British crown. Americans in the

early republic continued to view them with suspicion. In seven of the original 13 states. governors were elected for just one-year terms.

The job was certainly no steppingstone toward the White House. After George Washington, the next five presidents were vice presidents or secretaries of state when they ran. When Alexis de Tocqueville came to America in the 1830s to study its nascent democracy, one politician told him, "The governor counts for absolutely nothing and is only paid \$1,200!"

After the Civil War, governors started to come into popular favor. In 1876, both parties nominated a governor for president. Although New York Gov. Samuel Tilden won the popular vote, Ohio Gov. Rutherford B. Hayes received the majority in the Electoral College. (It was the Bush v. Gore election of its day.) For 52 of the next 68 years, the Oval Office was occupied by former governors. State governments in the early 1900s became "laboratories of democracy," as future Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis called them, experimenting with workplace safety regulation and a host of other reforms. That made state governors like Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson into much more prominent figures, who moved easily onto the national stage.

But after World War II, experience in Washington came into vogue. All of our chief executives from Truman to Ford were former members of Congress, with the notable exception of ex-Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower. Amid the national security concerns of the Cold War, voters wanted their commander in chief to be someone who knew his way around the federal government.

Writing in 1959, pollster Louis Harris

wondered whether an ex-governor could ever win the presidency again. "In a cos-mic, atomic, mass-media age, governors have shrunk to ... local figures," Harris

But the tide would turn again in the 1970s, when the Watergate scandal soured Americans on Washington pols. At the same time the rise of modern conservatism devolved many powers to the states and made "Washington, D.C." a term of derision and scorn. Starting with Carter in 1976, four of the next five presidents were former governors.

Then came a U.S. senator, Barack Obama, who beat the trend. He defeated a fellow senator (John McCain) the first time around and an ex-governor (Mitt Romney) the next. His party appears likely to select another ex-senator, Hillary Rodham Clinton, to run in 2016.

So despite all the GOP governors lining up to be the presidential nominee, don't be surprised if Republicans choose a senator with a national profile - say, Ted Cruz, Marco Rubio or Rand Paul.

The scope of the federal government has greatly expanded during the Obama years, including health care, the National Security Agency and the presidential order on immigration. And the more influence that the federal government exerts on voters. the more they see the advantages of a candidate from inside the Beltway. Like it or not, that makes Congress - not the statehouse — the more likely training school for our next president.

Ionathan Zimmerman teaches history and Jonathan Zimmerman teaches history and education at New York University. He is the author of "Too Hot to Handle: A Global History of Sex Education," which will be published in March by Princeton University Press. This column first appeared in the Los Angeles Times.

Uniform standards will help DODEA students

By BENNIE E. WILLIAMS

e have the most technologically advanced military in the world, but its real backbone is still our men and women in uniform. Without them, our tanks would not roll, ships would not sail, jets would not fly - and our nation and world would be less safe.

Now consider this: According to the Department of Defense, an estimated 71 percent of all young Americans between the ages of 17 and 24 are unable to join the military, primarily because they are too poorly educated, are physically unfit or have a criminal record.

One in 5 high school students nationwide does not graduate on time - many of those students do not graduate at all — and it is very difficult to join the military without a high school degree. Even among young adults who do finish high school, almost 1 in 4 who seeks to enlist cannot score highly enough on the ASVAB, the military's exam for math, literacy and problem solving, to be able to join.

When more than 70 percent of our young adults cannot qualify to serve their country, they also cannot qualify for a lot of today's well-paying civilian careers

As a retired major general and former chief of staff of Baltimore City Public Schools. I am afraid that if we do not take bold steps, we are going to find it harder and harder to identify, recruit and train the right people to do the jobs we need them to do in both the military and civilian sectors.

I recently participated in a forum on education and the military that was organized in response to Army Chief of Staff Gen. Ray Odierno's statement that the Army will consider the quality of schools around its installations as one of the criteria for future force restructuring decisions.

This statement resonated with me because education was always a top priority for my family during my 35 years in the Army. We would scout out the schools on base and off base to decide which ones our children would attend.

The education forum highlighted the importance of students graduating from high school prepared for college, careers and the military, if they choose to serve. For years, each state had its own particular educational standards and tests to assess whether students were meeting them Standards and levels of "proficiency" varied greatly across the states. As a result, knowing that a young person who wanted to join the military had a high school diplo-

ma really didn't tell us very much.

The Common Core State Standards can help ensure that children are receiving a consistent, high-quality education no matter where they live and go to school. The Common Core Standards in English language arts and mathematics are rigorous, internationally benchmarked learning goals that outline what students should know at each grade level and upon high school graduation.

Those standards were a state-led effort adopted in 43 states, the District of Columbia, and the Department of Defense Education Activity, which educates students on bases around the world

Under the standards, teachers are encouraging students to really dig deep and problem-solve in new and more challenging ways. And instead of teaching things in isolation and moving on, they are able to spend more time on a topic to ensure that the students have a strong grasp and have really mastered the concepts.

Having consistent, rigorous standards is especially beneficial to children in military families, who typically attend six to nine different schools during their K-12 school years and are frequently burdened by variations in school standards. For example, a student could master the skills and knowledge to progress from the fifth to the sixth grade in one state, then find himself far behind his classmates when he started sixth grade in a new school in the

I know these challenges from personal experience. My family moved 17 times during my military service. My children did a great job adapting to new school environments, but they also had to work extra hard to catch up and learn content that was not covered by their previous schools.

It is also important that states have assessments aligned to the standards. These assessments will allow educators to determine how students are really doing and to use this information to improve instruction.

We would never have gone into a complex mission in the Army without making sure we could meet certain benchmarks along the way. No one should expect schools to successfully educate students without clear accountability measures along the way.

The new standards and assessments will not magically turn things around overnight. But rigorous standards and aligned assessments are a solid part of the solution for educating our children, which is essential for not just their future, but also our future national security.

Bennie E. Williams serves on the Executive Bennie E. Williams serves on the Executive Advisory Council of Mission: Readiness, a nonpartisan national security organization of more than 500 retired admirals, generals and other retired senior military leaders that advo-cates smart investments in America's children.

OPINION

The end of Christian communities in Iraq?

By Trudy Rubin
The Philadelphia Inquirer

n Christmas Day in 2008, I attended early morning Mass at tended early morning Mass at tended the Al Qaleb Al Aqdas (Sacred Heart) Church, in the Karrada district of Baghdad. Although Christians had already become targets in Iraq's civil war and thousands had fled, the Chaldean Catholic church was filled with well-dressed families, and a choir sang near a large Christmas tree. Some worshippers continued on to a Santa Claus show in a nearby park.

Those days are long gone.

The number of Chaldeans (whose church dates to the early Christian era), and of members of other ancient Iraqi Christian sects, has plummeted in recent years amid repeated attacks by Shiite and Sunni Islamists. But the most terrible blow came this year, when Islamic State terrorists sent 200,000 Christians fleeing from their historical heartland in northern Iraq, including the city of Mosul, leaving it empty of Christians for the first time in 1,600 years.

"As I speak, the process of the eradication of Christians in Iraq and throughout
the Middle East continues," the Detroitbased Chaldean Bishop Francis Kalabat
told a Senate hearing this month. Ten
years ago, he said, there were more than
350 churches in Iraq, but today there are
fewer than 40. Many were bombed and
destroyed, especially in the historically
Christian villages of the north. Community
leaders estimate that the Christian population has dropped from more than a million
to fewer than 400,000, many of them internal refugees.

"The United States has a unique role and obligation in this conflict," Kalabat added in a stunning indictment, "... because the plight of Christians in Iraq today is a direct result of the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003."

What did Kalabat mean? The bishop,



An Iraqi Christian woman takes communion during Christmas Eve mass in the Chaldean Church of the Virgin Mary in al-Qoush, northern Iraq. Many of the worshippers fled their homes after Islamic State militants swept through northern Iraq in August.

who serves 175,000 Chaldean Catholics in North America, explained: "The poorly planned and executed goal of regime change and the more recent withdrawal of U.S. troops left in its wake a weakened and decentralized national government, sectarian warfare, and the practice of government by tribes or ... by gang." This lack of national unity, he added, left a dangerous void filled "hopefully only temporarily" by the Islamic State.

What the bishop didn't say is that with few exceptions, the Middle East's Christian communities have looked to Arab dictators or monarchs to protect them, including Saddam Hussein in Iraq, Bashar Assad in Syria, and the generals who led Egypt before the Tahrir Square revolution and are now leading it again.

Some Christians hoped that the advent of new Arab democracies might usher in an era of pluralism in which they would be welcome. Instead, the 2011 revolts sparked sectarian wars in Iraq and Syria in which Christians were targeted.

The one place in Iraq that has offered Christian refugees shelter, and is now hosting about 200,000 of them, is Iraqi Kurdistan, an autonomous region in the north. Its non-Arab, Muslim population suffered greatly under Saddam Hussein and now welcomes other persecuted minorities. The Kurds, however, are drowning under the burden of hundreds of thousands of members of minority groups who are fleeing the Islamic State. They include not just Christians, but Yazidis and others.

This raises several pressing questions:
In the long term, can Christians ever return to their Iraqi heartland, which includes the Islamic State-occupied city of Mosul? Do Arab Christians, whose roots in the region precede the Muslim conquest, have a future in Iraq or, indeed, in the region? And if Iraq's Christians can't return home, what will the United States

and Europe do to help the Kurds give them permanent shelter or to absorb those who want to make their homes in the West?

Kalabat's comments and my conversations via Skype with aid workers in Irbil, Kurdistan, made it clear that finding an answer to the last question is urgent. Although church groups in Irbil and abroad are helping Christian refugees, many are living in unfinished cinder-block buildings, an unfinished mall, and tents — in the midst of a cold, wet winter. Those with money to rent apartments are running through their savings. Their children aren't being educated because Kurdish schools can't cope with the influx.

Yet most Christian refugees in Kurdistan doubt they can return to their cities
and villages, because their Sunni Arab
neighbors betrayed them to the Islamic
State. "The neighbors wrote the letter N,
for Nazarite, on their homes to identify
them as Christians," Kalabat said, "and
told them to leave within 24 hours." The
bishop doubts that most will go back even
if the Islamic State is defeated, unless they
are guaranteed protection by some international force, which is unlikely.

Moreover, the Islamic State is destroying churches, shrines and ancient manuscripts to wipe out signs of Christian identity. And while the central Iraqi government says it supports Christians, it is providing no help to the refugees, says the bishop. Kalabat wants Western governments to pressure Baghdad to provide more help and to funnel international aid directly to Christian organizations or Kurdish officials.

But in this Christmas season, the longterm plight of Christians in Iraq and the region requires serious thought by Western governments. It is clear that much of the Arab Muslim world, to its detriment, is becoming ever less tolerant of minorities. So it's time for the Western governments that contributed to the problem to consider taking in more Christian refugees.

Trudy Rubin is a columnist and editorial board member for The Philadelphia Inquirer.

West can't fall for China's promise of rule by law

By TENG BIAO

uring the year that is drawing to a close this week, much has been made of the Communist Party of China's new emphasis on "governing the country according to law." But those who imagine that fundamental reforms will flow from this rhetoric would do well to remember the warning that Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Jiang Yu gawe in response to questions about the legal justification for a 2011 incident of press mistreatment: "Don't use the law as a shield." I don't understand why some are so willing to believe what the party says while disregarding what it does.

This is hardly the first time the Communists have raised the banner of "rule of law." Even before they seized power and established totalitarian rule, they promised liberty and constitutional democracy. In 1997, the idea was written into the report delivered at the party's 15th Congress, and in 1999 it was written into the Constitution. But that same year saw the savage repression of the Falun Gong. Since President Xi Jinping came to power, hundreds of rights defenders and intellectuals have been thrown into prison for political reasons. Properties have been expropriated or demolished, free speech has been restricted, religion has been suppressed, women have been forced to have abortions, and torture has multiplied. In Xinjiang and Tibet, the authorities have carried out one shocking

human rights catastrophe after another. The abuses have never stopped. To the Chinese Communist Party, "gov-

erning the country according to law "does not mean rule of law as you and I understand it. The essential element required for rule of law — using the law to limit the power of the government — stands in ideological opposition to the purpose of the party. In reality, the rule of law that the party talks about is "Lenin plus Emperor (In Shi Huang" — modern totalitarianism combined with pre-modern Chinese "legalism." It is nothing more than a tool to further control society. Rule of law is always superseded by the rule of the party, and there is not a shred of doubt about this.

The legislative organs controlled by the Communist Party have promulgated volumes of statutes. The judicial organs, also controlled by the party, are busy with cases. The legal professions have been developed. But is the law at the center of the governing order?

As University of Hong Kong law professor Fu Hualing has pointed out, many extra-legal processes — and extra extralegal processes — stand above and apart from the law. These include shuanggui (an extralegal detention and interrogation system used to enforce discipline within the party), media restrictions, house arrest, secret police, "black jails," chengguan (a para-police force that works with police across the country to enforce minor city rules and regulations), spying on citizens, torture, disappearances and Internet police. Without such tools, how long could the Communist Party continue to rule?

This year's "governing the country according to law" is just another attempt by the party to address its crisis of legitimacy. Such slogans may help the party fool people within China and the international community. But legitimacy can come only via recognition given through free elections, and here the party is stuck. Clinging to me-party rule, it completely rejects general elections, even in Hong Kong. True rule of law would mean the end of the one-party system. This is the limitation on the legalization process that cannot be overcome.

Over the past 10 years, I and other human rights defenders have consistently sought to use Chinese laws to carry out our human rights work, and occasionally we've had success. But the limitations are obvious. Whenever the authorities begin to feel a threat from civil society, they move to suppress it. I have had my lawyer's license revoked, been expelled from my university and been kidnapped several times. When the security police were torturing me, they shouted, "Don't talk about any of this law stuff with us."

In enumerating the progress being made in China, some observers have pointed out the falling number of death sentences, a new criminal procedure law, the abolishment of re-education through labor, reform

of the local courts, the government's willingness to release more information and the ongoing anti-corruption campaign. But it is questionable whether this represents progress. And even if it does, the major driving force for these changes has been not the party but the people—each change a result of pressure by rights alwayers, democracy activists and countless Chinese

on the lower rungs of society.
Xi Jinping once talked about locking up
power in a cage, but this is not much different than a magician wrapping an iron chain
around himself. In reality, what party officials would like to do, and are doing, is to
lock the people in a cage. Sycophants are
able to imagine a "spring" for rule of law
that doesn't exist only by ignoring human
rights disasters suffered by Ilham Tohti,
Xu Zhiyong, Cao Shunli, Gao Zhisheng, Uighurs, Tibetans, petitioners, Falun Gong
adherents and house churches.

This kind of selective blindness has prevented Western readers and politicians from understanding the reality in today's China. It's no surprise that this type of seemingly even-handed wishful thinking has become the excuse for Western governments to adopt short-sighted policies of appeasement in dealing with autocratic regimes and for favoring trade over human rights.

Teng Biao is a human rights lawyer and a visiting fellow at Harvard Law School. This column first appeared in The Washington Post.

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Autos for Sale Volkswagen, Tiguan TSI (SE), 2012 \$19850.00 (Turbo Sport Injection) with 16,500 miles. Dark Blue with Tan Leather Interior, Front seat heaters, side view mirror heaters, This car is queck, and comfortable with system includes a touchscreen with 6 CD Change and Insystem includes a Touchscreen with 6 CD Changer and IPod connection. Car was purchased in APR 2012; priced \$500 below NADA and includes one final full service for free and an extended 7-year warranty (4.5 years left) from Milliary Auto Source. Great car for Europeit 93935424891 daniel. brush @us.amry.mi

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Deals

Sunday's transactions

Sunday's transIOXEY
National Hockey League
ARIZONA COYOTES - Recalled F Tyler
audet from Portland (AHL).
CAROLINA HURRICANES - Reassigned
Pendan Woods to Charlotte (AHL).

CAROLINA HURKILARIS—
Ferendan Woods to Charlotte (AHL).
Ferendan Woods to Charlotte (AHL).
COLUMBUS BLUE JACKETS—Assigned
SANGLES STATE to Springled (AHL).
FOR MALLOS STATE TO SANGLED TO SANGLED AND SANGLED TO SANGLED TO

Cormier from St. John's (AHL).
COLLEGE
MINNESOTA — Dismissed WR Donovahn Jones from the football program for a violation of team policy.

College hockey

Sunday's scores

Union (NY) 3, Sacred Heart 1 Quinnipiac 1, Princeton 0 Providence 4, UMass 1 UMass-Lowell 3, UConn 1 Vermont 4, Air Force 2

Vermont 4, Air Force 2 SOUTH Notre Dame 3, Miami (Ohio) 2, OT Lake Superior St. 0, Cornell 0, OT MIDWEST Michigan 2 Michigan Tech 1 Ferris St. 2, Michigan St. 1 EXHIBITION Harvard 4, Russian Red Stars 0 Colorado College 8, U.S. National U18

AP sportlight

Dec. 30
1956 — The New York Giants win the
NFL title with a 47-7 rout of the Chicago
Bears.
1952 — The Green Bay Packers beat
the New York Giants 16-7 to win the NFL

title for the second straight year.

1973 — The Minnesota Vikings beat
the Dallas Cowboys 27-10 to win the NFC

title for the second straight year.

1973. — The Minnesota Wikings beat
1973. — The Minnesota Wikings beat
1973. — The Minnesota Wikings beat
1974. — The Minnesota Wikings beat he start in a
1974. — The Minnesota Wikings beat

me.
2011 — Blake Bell runs for three touch 2011 – Blake Bell runs for three touch-downs to help Oklahoma survive a late rally and a crashing camera to beat lowa 31.14 in the insight Bowl. A camera, pro-viding overhead shots for ESPN, hanging with 2:22 left in the game. The camera bounces off the field around the 20-yard line and narrowly misses lowa receiver Marvin McNutt Jr., who got tangled in the wire after the camera hit the turf. marvin McNutt Jr., who got tangled in the wire after the camera hit the turf. McNutt isn't injured and the camera is dragged off the field, causing a delay of about 5 minutes.

College football

Bowl schedule

Saturday, Dec. 20 New Orleans Bowl Louisiana-Lafayette 16, Nev New Mexico Bowl rada 3 At Albuquerque Utah State 21, UTEP 6

Utah State 21, UTEP 6

Utah 45, Colorado State 10
Famous Idah Potato Bowl
Air Force 38, Western Michigan 24
Camelia Bowl
At Montgomery, Ala.
Bowling Green 33, South Alabama 28
Monday, Dec. 22
Montan Bowl

Miami Beach Duwi Memphis 55, BYU 48, 20T Tuesday, Dec. 23 Boca Raton (Fla.) Bowl Marshall 52, Northern Illinois 23 Poinsettia Bowl Marshall 52, Northern Illinoi Poinsettia Bowl At San Diego Navy 17, San Diego State 16 Wednesday, Dec. 24 Bahamas Bowl

At Nassau Western Kentucky 49, Central Michigan 48

Hawaii Bowl Rice 30, Fresno State 6
Friday, Dec. 26
Heart of Dallas Bowl Friday, Dec. 26
Louisland To Dailas Bowl Louisland To Dailas Bowl Louisland Dailas Bowl State Control Carolina Bowl State Control Carolina 23
Rutgers 40, Hot Profile Carolina 23
N.C. State 34, UCF 27Fis.) Bowl
N.C. State 34, UCF 27Fis.
Milliant Bowl
M. Wirginia Tech 33, Cincinnati 17
M. State 35, Uche 31
Independence Bowl
At Shreveport, La.
South Carolina 25, UCF 27Fis.
South Carolina 25

At San Diego Southern Cal 45, Nebraska 42 Monday, Dec. 29 Liberty Bowl At Memphis, Tenn. West Virginia (7-5) vs. Texas A&M (7-

5) Russell Athletic Bowl

At Orlando, Fla. Clemson (9-3) vs. Oklahoma (8-4) Texas Bowl At Houston Texas (6-6) vs. Arkansas (6-6)

Tuesday, Dec. 30
Music City Bowl
At Nashville, Tenn.
Notre Dame (7-5) vs. LSU (8-4)
Belk Bowl

Notre Dame (7-5) vs. LSU (8-4)
Best Bowl
Ask Bow

ch (10-3)

Thursday, Jan. 1

Outback Bowl

At Tampa, Fla.

Wisconsin (10-3) vs. Auburn (8-4)

Cotton Bowl Classic

Cotton Bowl Classic
At Arlington, Texas
Michigan State (10-2) vs. Baylor (11-1)
Citrus Bowl
At Orlando, Fla.
Minnesota (8-4) vs. Missouri (10-3)

Pro baseball

MLB Calendar

- Baseball Writers' Association of America Hall of Fame voting results

of America Hall of Father voting rescaled announced.

Jan. 13 — Salary arbitration filing.

Jan. 14-15 — Owners' meetings, Paradise Valley, Ariz.

Jan. 16 — Salary arbitration figures

exchanged.

Feb. 19 — Voluntary reporting date for pitchers, catchers and injured players. Feb. 1-21 — Salary arbitration hear-ings, St. Petersburg, Fla. Feb. 24 — Voluntary reporting date for

other players.

March 3 — Mandatory reporting date.

March 18 — Last day to place a player on unconditional release waivers and pay 30 days termination pay instead of April 1 - Last day to request uncondi-

tional release waivers on a player with-out having to pay his full 2014 salary. April 5 — Opening day, St. Louis at Chicago Cubs. Active rosters reduced to 25

June 8 — Amateur draft begins. July 14 — All-Star Game, Cincinnati.

Rose Bowl At Pasadena, Calif. semifinal: Oregon (12-1) vs

Playoff semifinal: Oregon (12-1) vs. Florida State (13-0) Sugar Bowl At New Orleans Playoff semifinal: Alabama (12-1) vs.

Playon Service Ohio State (12-1) Friday, Jan. 2 Armed Forces Bowl At Fort Worth, Texas

At Fort Worth, Texas
Pittsburgh (6-6) vs. Houston (7-5)
TaxSlayer Bowl
At Jacksonville, Fla.
lowa (7-5) vs. Tennessee (6-6)
Alamo Bowl
At San Antonio

UCLA (9-3) vs. Kansas State (9-3) Cactus Bowl At Tempe, Ariz.
Oklahoma State (6-6) vs. Washington

Saturday, Jan. 3

Saturday, Jan. 3
Florida (6-5) vs. East Carolina (8-4)
Sunday, Jan. 4
Gobaddy Bowl
Toledo (8-4) vs. Arkansas State (7-5)
Saturday, Jan. 10
Medal of Honor Bowl

Art charleston, S.C.
American vs. National
Monday, Jan. 12
College Football Championship
At Arlington, Texas Sugar Bowl winner vs. Rose Bowl win

Saturday, Jan. 17 East-West Shrine Classic At St. Petersburg, Fla. East vs. West NFLPA Collegiate Bowl At Carson, Calif. National vs. American Saturday, Jan. 24

Senior Bowl At Mobile, Ala. North vs. South

FCS playoffs

First Round
Saturday, Nov. 29
Fordham 44, Sacred Heart 22
Indiana State 36, Eastern Kentucky 16
Richmond 46, Morgan State 24
Sam Houston State 21, Southeastern
Louisiana 17
South Dalache Cart. South Dakota State 47, Montana State

Montana 52, San Diego 14 Liberty 26, James Madison 21 Northern Iowa 44, Stephen F. Austin

Second Round
Saturday, Dec. 6
New Halampshire 44, Fordham 19
Chattampshire 44, Fordham 19
Chattampshire 44, Fordham 19
Chattampshire 44, Fordham 19
Illinois State 41, Northern Iowa 21
Sam Houston State 37, Jacksonville
Sam Houston State 37, Jacksonville
And Control Bakota State 27, South Dakota
State 24
Eastern Washington 37, Montane 20
Villanova 29, Liberty 20
Villanova 20

tate 24
Eastern Washington 37, Montana 20
Villanova 29, Liberty 22
Quartefinals
Friday, Dec. 13
New Hampshire 35, Chattanooga 30
Saturday, Dec. 13
North Dakota State 39, Coastal Carola 32

na 32 Sam Houston State 34, Villanova 31 Illinois State 59, Eastern Washington

Semifinals Friday, Dec. 19 North Dakota State 35, Sam Houston State 3

Saturday, Dec. 20 Illinois State 21, New Hampshire 18 nimors State 21, New Hampshire 18 Championship Saturday, Jan. 10 Af FC Dallas Stadium Frisco, Texa North Dakota State (14-1) vs. Illinois State (13-1)

Boxing

Fight schedule

Dec. 30
At Tokyo, Omar Narvaez vs. Naoya
Inoue, 12, for Narvaez's WBO super flyweight title; Akira Yaegashi vs. Pedro
Guevara, 12, for the vacant WBC World

Guevara, 12, for the vacant WBC World junior flyweight title; Jorge Linares vs. Javier Prieto, 12, for the vacant WBC Dec. 31 Af Ota City General (sym. Tokyo, Israel Perez, vs. Takashi Uchiyama, 12, for Uchi-Perez, vs. Takashi Uchiyama, 12, for Uchi-Kohel Kono vs. Norberto Jimenez, 12, for Kohel Kono vs. Norberto Jimenez, 12, for Kono's WBA junior bantamweight title; Alberto Rossel vs. Ryoichi Taguchi, 14, Alberto R

2015 Jan. 9

At Chumash Casino Resort, Santa Ynez, Callf, Darfoys Perez vs. Jonathan Lightweight title; Francisco Santana vs. Sebastian Lujan, 10, welterweights. At Madison Square Garden Theater, At Madison Square Garden Theater, vs. Tommy Rainone, 10, welterweights. Urreano Johnson vs. Alex Therani, 15, middleweights; Cecil McCalla vs. Chris Van Heerden, 10, welterweights,

College basketball

Sunday's men's scores

EAST Army 93, Coast Guard 48 Brown 79, Sacred Heart 76 Buffalo St. 85, Montclair St. 80 Buffalo St. 85. Montclair St. 80
Columbia 96, Colgate 44
Hofstra 88, LIU Brooklyn 62
Husson 79, Scranton 74
Iona 81, Drewel 62
Iona 81, Drewel 63
Iona 81, Drewel 63
Iona 81, Drewel 63
Iona 81, Drewel 63
Iona 81, Fairfield 59, OT
Iona 81, Group 81
Iona 81
I Columbia 69, Colgate 64

Elon 69, Marist 64 High Point 85, Thomas (Ga.) 48 Liberty 78, Cincinnati Christian 58 NC A&T 58, NC Wesleyan 54 Radford 119, Cent. Pennsylvania 69 Samford 65, Campbell 56

SIU-Edwardsville 104, Robert Morris-

Chicago 56 South Dakota 84, Milwaukee 60 South Dakota 84, Milwaukee 60
Texas Southern 58, Kansas St. 56
UMKC 73, Indiana St. 70, 20T
Wisconsin 68, Buffalo 55
Xavier 71, Florida Gulf Cost 55
Xavier 71, Florida Gulf Cost 57
SOUTHWEST
Arkansas 100, Northwestern St. 92
Houston 80, MVSU 53
Onal Roberts 94, Haskell Indian Nations 42
FAP WEST

ns 42 FAR WEST
Arizona St. 56, Harvard 46
CS Bakersfield 55, California 52
Fresno St. 93, Saint Katherine 62
Grand Canyon 83, Abilen Christian 81
Hampden-Sydney 69, Wartburg 55
N. Arizona 71, San Diego Christian 45
Story Brook 62, Washington 57
Washington 51, 90, UC Davis 83

Sunday's women's scores

Boston College 79, Providence 51
Bucknell 68, Binghamton 57
Dartmouth 76, Niagara 70
Duquesne 82, Lehigh 75
George Washington 72, Loyola (Md.)

Holy Cross 63, Norfolk St. 62 La Salle 73, Fairfield 59 Montclair St. 72, Baruch 62 New Hampshire SS, Manhattan 54 New Hampshire SS, Manhattan 54 Pittsburgh 97, St. Francis (Pa.) 59 Seton Hall 70, Georgia 51 Siena 80, Colgate 68 Stony Brook 59, W. Michigan 55 Syracuse 76, Cornell 59 Towson 72, George Mason 70 UMass 78, Boston U. 57

SOUTH Alabama 71, MVSU 40 Florida 63, North Florida 51 Kentucky 87, Tennessee St. 75 Middle Tennessee 98, Tennessee Tech

Middle Tennessee 98, Tennessee 17, Enthonoris 98, William 8, Mary 55 SC State 60, Coll. of Charleston 51 South Florida 69, East Carolina 62 Temple 58, Memphis 57 Carolina 62 Temple 58, Memphis 57 Carolina 62 Temple 58, Memphis 57 Carolina 64, Carolina

SOUTHWEST
Chattanooga 99, SIU-Edwardsville 49
Rice 97, Lamar 63
South Dakota 76, UTSA 69
UTEP 63, Alcorn 5t. 53
FAR WEST
Arizona 5t. 69, Yale 51
Long Beach St. 71, LIU Brooklyn 63
Note To barne 8t. 69, Wale 51
Stanford 90 UC Santa Barbara 34
TURNAMENT

TOURNAMENT Hawk Classic First Round

Florida Gulf Coast 73 CS Northridge Quinnipiac 69, Saint Joseph's 67 Miami Holiday Tournament First Round

LSU 82, UNC-Greensboro 61 Miami 83, Florida A&M 47

Skiing

World Cup

World Cup
Mers downhill
Sunday
At Sam, At Sam,

Jared Goldberg, United States, 1:34.07. 29. Marco Sullivan, United States, 1:34.19. 50. Bryce Bennett, United States,

Andrew Weibrecht, United States, did not finish. Thomas Biesemeyer, United States,

Thomas Biesemeyer, United States World Cap Downhill Standings World Cafter four races)
1. Kjetil Jansrud, Norway, 294 points.
2. Dominik Paris, Italy, 220.
3. Travis Ganong, United States, 191.
5. Guillermo Fayed, France, 170.
6. Matthias Mayer, Austria, 161.
7. Beat Feuz, Switzerland, 152.
9. Johan Clarew, France, 116.
9. Johan Clarew, France, 116. 9. Johan Clarey, France, 116. 10. Manuel Osborne-Paradis, Canada,

6.

22. Marco Sullivan, United States, 47.
40. Maple Wiley, United States, 9.
41. Jared Goldbeg, United States, 7.
46. Ted Ligety, United States, 3.
47. Andrew Weibrecht, United States,

Overall World Cup Standings (After 14 events) Kjetil Jansrud, Norway, 694 points. Marcel Hirscher, Austria, 576. Dominik Paris, Italy, 405. Alexis Pinturault, France, 349.

4. Alexis Pinturault, France, 349.
5 Fritz Dopfer, Germany, 341.
7 Hauff the Reichelt, 45 Hauff, 313.
7 Hauff the Reichelt, 45 Hauff, 313.
7 Hauff, 313.
7 Hauff, 313.
7 Hauff, 313.
8 Matthias Mayer, Austria, 262.
8 Henrik Kristoffersen, korway, 195.
9 Henrik Kristoffersen, korway, 195.
10. Travis Ganonier, 197.
10.
10. Travis Ganonier, 197.
10.
10. Steven Nyan, Ohited States, 193.
44. Tim Jitloff, United States, 193.
44. Tim Jitloff, United States, 193.

60. Marco Sullivan, United States, 47. 75. David Chodounsky, United States, 28

118. Thomas Bellevier actives of the States, 6. Women's Gaint Slalom States, 6. Women's Gaint Slalom At Kuehtal, Austria 1.217.61 (1.08.49.10.91.91), limper, Austria, 2:17.70 (1.08.59.10.91.91). United States, 3. Mikeala Shiffrin, United States, 2:17.79 (1.08.69.10.91.91), seem, Austria, 2:17.89 (1.08.69.10.91.91), seem, Austria, 2:17.89 (1.08.69.10.91.91), S. Ragnhild Mowinckel, Norway, 2:18.15 (6.09.40.19.19). For Prefortatine, Canada, 6. Marie-Pier Prefortatine, Canada, 6. Marie-Pier Prefortatine, Canada, 6.

(1:09.24-1:08.91). 6. Marie-Pier Prefontaine, Canada, 2:18.20 (1:08.94-1:09.26). 7. Dominique Gisin, Switzerland, 2:18.29 (1:08.77-1:09.52). 7. Tina Maze, Slovenia, 2:18.29 (1:09.23-

1:09.06). 9. Adeline Baud, France, 2:18.52 (1:09.90-1:08.62).

(1:09.90-1:08.62). 10. Viktoria Rebensburg, Germany, 2:18.70 (1:09.50-1:09.20). Also
United States. Megan McJames, United State 1:14.64 (55th), did not qualify for secon

n. World Cup Giant Slalom Standings (After four races) 1. Eva-Maria Brem, Austria, 270

inits.
2. Anna Fenninger, Austria, 242.
3. Mikaela Shiffrin, United States, 226.
4. Sara Hector, Sweden, 219.
5. Tina Maze, Slovenia, 195.
6. Kathrin Zettel, Austria, 170.
7. Federica Brignone, Italy, 160.
8. Viktoria Rebensburg, Germany, 102.
9. Maria Pietilae-Holmner, Sweden,

9. Maria Pietilae-Holmner, Sweden, 99. 10. Ragnhild Mowinckel, Norway, 84.

22. Julia Manouso, United States, 14.

43. Megan McJames, United States, 14.

43. Megan McJames, United States, 10.

1. Tina World Cup Standings, 10.

2. Anna Fenninger, Austria, 407.

3. Lindsey Vonn, United States, 312.

4. Kathrin Zettel, Austria, 2018.

6. Maria Pietilae-Holmner, Sweden, 283.

33.

10. Frida Hansdotter, Sweden, 248.

Also
Also
Also
L1. Stacey Cook, United States, 126.
24. Laurenne Ross, United States, 117.
47. Resi Stegler, United States, 117.
57. Alice McKennis, United States, 218.
Jacqueline Wiles, United States, 29.

95. Megan McJames, United States, 5

第3種郵便物設可

Pistons cruise past Cavs

Detroit notches 17 three-pointers for season high

The Associated Press

CLEVELAND - Brandon Jennings scored 25 points, and the Detroit Pistons used an 18-0 run in the second quarter to roll past the Cleveland Cavaliers 103-80 on Sunday.

It was Cleveland's second blowout loss at home in less than two weeks. The Cavaliers lost 127-98 to Atlanta on Dec. 17, and the convincing victory for Detroit drew boos from the home crowd.

Andre Drummond had 16 points and 17 rebounds for the Pistons (7-23), who were coming off a 119-109 victory over Indiana on Friday. Reserve Jodie Meeks scored 14 points, and Kentavious Caldwell-Pope had 13.

Detroit set a season high for made three-pointers by going 17for-31 from long range.

Kevin Love had 20 points and 10 rebounds for Cleveland, and LeBron James finished with 17 points, 10 boards and seven as-sists. Tristan Thompson also had a double-double for the Cavs, collecting 18 points and 11

Cavaliers point guard Kyrie Irving missed his second straight game because of a bruised left knee

James appeared to get hit in the left hip late in the first half. but started the third quarter. The four-time MVP, clearly frustrated by the loss, went to the bench for good with 5:34 remaining and Cleveland trailing 95-71.

The Pistons have won both of

Roundup



The Pistons' Brandon Jennings, right, drives against the Cavalie A.J. Price during Sunday's game in Cleveland. Jennings scored 25 points in the Pistons' 103-80 win.

their games since releasing veteran forward Josh Smith last

Cleveland led 32-17 early in the second and was ahead 43-32 midway through the period before the Pistons took over. Detroit hit four three-pointers, including two by Jennings, and Drummond had a dunk and a basket in the lane in a span of 4:40.

The Pistons led 50-43 before Love hit a three-pointer and James added a free throw in the last minute of the first half. but Detroit increased the lead to double figures early in the third quarter and steadily pulled away, leading by 27 points in the

Cavaliers forward Shawn Marion left the game with an ankle injury after missing a dunk on a pass from James. Marion landed awkwardly and was on the floor for a couple of minutes before being helped to the locker room. He returned in the third quarter.

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division											
	W	L	Pct	GB							
Toronto	24	7	.774	-							
Brooklyn	13	16	.448	10							
Boston	10	18	.357	121/2							
New York	5	28	.152	20							
Philadelphia	4	25	.138	19							
Southea	st Divisi	ion									
Atlanta	22	8	.733	-							
Washington	21	8	.724	1/2							
Miami	14	17	.452	81/2							
Orlando	12	21	.364	111/2							
Charlotte	10	21	.323	121/2							
Centra	I Divisio	n									
Chicago	21	9	.700	-							
Cleveland	18	12	.600	3							
Milwaukee	15	16	.484	61/2							
Indiana	11	20	.355	101/2							
Detroit	7	23	.233	14							

Western Conference



A. Lakers 9 22 .290 1
Toronto Saturday's games
Toronto LiA. Elippers 38
Washington LiA. Elippers 38
Washington LiA. Elippers 38
Washington LiA. Elippers 39
Washington LiA. Elippers 39
Memphis 103, Minimi 95
Chicago 107, New Orleans 100
Chicago 107, New Orleans 100
Atlanta 90, Milwaukee 85
Lutah 88, Philadelphia 71
Sacramento 135, New York 129, OT
Golden State 110, Minnesota 97

Sunday's games
Sunday's games
Detroit 103, Cleveland 80
San Antonio 110, Houston 106
Dailas 112, Oklahoma City 107
Portland 101, New York 79
Toronto 116, Denver 102
Phoenix 116, L.A. Lakers 107

Phoenix 116, L.A. Lakers 10 Monday's games Chicago at Indiana Milwaukee at Charlotte Orlando at Miami Sacramento at Brooklyn Washington at Houston Utah at L.A. Clippers Tuesday's games

Detroit at the Gesday's games
Detroit at the Gesday's games
Cleveland at Atlanta
Phoenix at New Orleans
Brooklyn at Chicago
San Antonio at Memphis
Washington at Delias
LA Lakers at Denver
Minnesota at Utah
Toronto at Portland
Philadelphia at Golden State

Sunday Suns 116, Lakers 107

Suns 116, Lakers 107
PHOENIX - Tucker 69-00 12. Mark.
Morris 5-10 2-81 21. Len 4-6-0-9. 8, G.Dragic
Photo 12. Len 4-6-0-9. 8, G.Dragic
3-0-06, Thomas 4-7-5-18, G.Dragic
2-28, Marc.Morris 4-61-29, Randolph 0-1
2-28, Marc.Morris 4-61-29, Randolph 0-1
2-28, Marc.Morris 4-61-29, Randolph 0-1
2-8, Marc.Morris 4-1
2-8, Marc.M

Bledsoé 1-3, Tucker Ö-1, Mark Morris Ö-4), L.A. Lakers 12-20 (Young 4-6, Johnson 3-6, Price 2-2, Lin 2-3, Bryant 1-3), Fouled Out–None, Rebounds—Phoenis S2 (Bled-soe, Len 8), L.A. Lakers 44 (Bryant, Davis 8), Assists—Phoenix 24 (Bledsoe 8), L.A. Lakers 22 (Bryant 7), Total Fouls—Phoe-nix 15, L.A. Lakers 19, Technicals—Marc. Morris, Phoenix defensive three second. A–18,397 (18,397).

Raptors 116. Nuggets 102

TORONTO — J.Johnson 2-4 1-2 5, Johnson 5-8 3-3 13, Valanciunas 2-5 3-

27 33 28 28-116 24 30 33 15-102 Denver 2 4 39 31 15-102
Three-Point Goals—Toronto 10-23
(Williams 4-1, Lowry 3-5, Patterson 2-4, Lowry 3-5, Patterson 2-4, Lowry 3-6, Patterson 2-4, Lidonson 1-3, Chandler 1-3, Lawson 1-4, Altonomous 1-4, Lawson 1-Denver

Trail Blazers 101, Knicks 79

NEW YORK — Anthony 5-14 3-3 13, Aldrich 6-16 0-2 12, Ja.Smith 2-7 2-2 6, Calderon 2-11 1-1 6, Hardaway Jr. 5-17 4-7 17, Acy 5-9 0-0 12, Larkin 3-10 0-0 6, Prigioni 1-5 0-0 3, Wear 2-4 0-0 4. Totals 31-93 10-15 79.

Prigion 1-5 0-5 , Wear 2-8 0-0 4 , Totals 31-0 OFTLAND — Batum 6-8 0-0 17, Robinson 2-5 1-2 5, Freeland 5-7 0-0 10, Lillard 4-11 1-2 11, Matthews 10-2 1-2 28, Blake 1-3 0-0 3, Kaman 5-9 3-4 13, Wright 0-2 0-0 , Crabbe 0-3 0-0 , Claver 1-6 0-0 3, Barton 1-2 2-2 4, McCollum 2-2 0-0 5, Leonard 1-2 0-0 2, Totals 38-819-12 10 17 21 - 79 Portland 31 24 21 25-101

Portland 31 24 21 25—101
Three-Point Goals—New York 7-27
(Hardaway Jr. 3-10, Acy 2-2, Calderon 1-4, Prigioni 1-5, Larkin 0-3, Anthony 0-3)
Portland 16-36 (Matthews 6-15, Batum 5-7, Lillard 2-6, McCollum 1-1, Claver 1-1 5-7, Lillard 2-6, McCollium 1-1, Claver 1-2, Blake 1-3, Crabbe 0-1, Wright 0-1), Fouled Out—None. Rebounds—New York 58 (Aldrich 19), Portland 55 (Freeland 10). Assists—New York 19 (Hardaway Jr. Larkin 5), Portland 25 (Lillard 6). Todd Fouls—New York 13, Portland 15. Technicals—Portland defensive three second. A—19,800 (19,980).

Mavericks 112, Thunder 107

OKLAHOMA CITY — Jones 5-11 0-0 10, Ibaka 11-14 1-2 26, Adams 4-8 3-5 11, Westbrook 6-23 6-9 18, Roberson 0-0 1-2 1, Jackson 10-17 0-0 21, Morrow 4-6 0-0 9 Thomas 0-0 0-0 0, I.Smith 3-5 0-0 6, Perkins 1-4 1-13, Collison 1-2 0-2 2. Totals 45 90 12-21 107. DALLAS — Ellis 6-20 5-5 18, Parsons 10

DALLAS - Ellis 6-20 5-5 18, VATSOITS 10-16 1-1 26, Nowitzki 8-13 12-12 30, Rondo 7-17 1-4 15, Barea 3-5 2-2 9, G.Smith 1-12 - 24, Harris 0-4 1-2 1, Villanueva 3-11 0-07, Jefferson 1-1 0-0 7, Felton 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 39-88 24-28 112.

Oklahoma City 26 32 30 19-107 26 32 30 19-107 33 31 17 31-112

Spurs 110, Rockets 106

Spurs 110, Rockets 106

Nousrod - Ariza 29-29.7 Spirith 2-7

1-2 5, Howard 11-13 2-7 24, Beverley 2-10

65, Harden 10-18-6 2, B. Motelliquas 3-5

6-6 1, 19-6 10-18-6 12, B. Motelliquas 3-5

6-7 1, 19-7 10-18-6 12, 19-7 11-7 11-7

5-8 1, 19-7 11-7 11-7 11-7

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Pistons 103, Cavaliers 80

DETROIT — Singler 2-7 1-2 7, Monroe 4-18 2-4 10, Drummond 8-12 0-2 16, Jen

Detroit Cleveland Cleveland 28 19 14 19-29
Three-Point Goals—Detroit 17-31 Uennings 5-9, Meeks 3-4, Caldwell-Pope 3-7,
Gustine 1-9, Cleveland 5-29 (James 2-6,
Dellavedoya 1-3, Miller 1-5, Love 1-7, HarGustine 1-0, Cleveland 5-97 (James 2-6,
Fouled Out 1-None, Rebounds 1-Detroit 53
(Drummond 17), Cleveland 5-7 (Thomps
Cleveland 25 (James 7, 1) Total Fouls 1-Detroit 53
(Drummond 17), Cleveland 5-7 (Thomps
Cleveland 25 (James 7, 1) Total Fouls 1-Detroit 23

Chamber 1-1, Cleveland 15-7 Erchnicals—Monroe A -2-0,562 (20,562),

Scoring leaders

Harde

Anthor Wade, Curry, Griffin, Aldridg Butler,

Butler, Lillard, Bosh, M Thomp Gay, SA

ocornig leaders												
	G	FG	FT	PTS	AV							
n, HOU	29	236	250	789								
CLE		256										
NOR	29	279	155	713	24.							
, LAL												
ny, NYK		263										
				535	23.							
GOL			106	671	23.							
LAC	31	272	158	709	22.							
je, POR	28	253	119	640								
		200	190	617	22.							
POR				697	21.							
MIA												
son, GOL		213		597								
AC:	28	208	142	589	21.							

Spurs snap skid vs. Rockets

The Associated Press

SAN ANTONIO - Danny Green had 24 points and the injury-depleted San Antonio Spurs beat the Houston Rockets 110-106 on Sunday night, snapping a six-game skid against their intrastate rivals.

Tim Duncan scored 16 points and Manu Ginobili had 15 for San Antonio (19-13), which won for first time in three games.

James Harden had 28 points for Houston (21-8), and Dwight Howard added 24 points and 17 rebounds. The Rockets' newest additions had differing levels of success: Corey Brewer scored 25 points, but Josh Smith finished with five points on 2-for-7 shooting.

Mavericks 112, Thunder 107: Dirk Nowitzki matched his season high with 30 points for host Dallas, and Chandler Parsons added 26.

The Mavericks rallied from seven points down to start the fourth quarter. They were without center Tyson Chandler, a late scratch with back spasms. The Thunder played their sixth straight game

without Kevin Durant because of a sprained right Trail Blazers 101, Knicks 79: Wesley Matthews

had 28 points, including six three-pointers, and host Portland beat short-handed New York. Portland was 16-for-36 from three-point range. Nicolas Batum had five three-pointers and 17

It was the eighth straight loss for the Knicks, who had just nine available players to start the game, and then lost Carmelo Anthony for the second half because of a sore left knee.

Raptors 116, Nuggets 102: Kyle Lowry had 30 points and 11 assists, leading visiting Toronto to the

Lou Williams scored 31 points as the Eastern Conference-leading Raptors completed a sweep of the season series against Denver. Ty Lawson led Denver with 28 points, and Wilson

Chandler had 20 points and 10 rebounds. Kenneth Faried had 17 points and 19 boards for the Nuggets, who have lost three of four.

Suns 116, Lakers 107: Goran Dragic scored 24 points, Eric Bledsoe had 20 of his 22 after halftime, and visiting Phoenix beat Los Angeles for its sixth consecutive victory.

Isaiah Thomas added 15 points for the balanced Suns, who haven't lost with their new starting lineup. The Lakers lost their third straight despite Kobe Bryant's return.

Bryant had 10 points, eight rebounds and seven assists in 32 minutes during his first game back from a three-game absence to rest his aching 36year-old body.

NHL/SPORTS BRIEFS

Roundup

Fowler nets OT winner for Ducks

ANAHEIM, Calif. - Things weren't looking too promising for the Anaheim Ducks until a couple of their defenseman came through with the tying and winning goals.

Cam Fowler scored at 2:42 of overtime after Francois Beauchemin provided the equalizer in the third period with his first goal of the season, and the NHL-leading Ducks rallied for a 2-1 victory over the Vancouver Canucks on Sunday night.

Frederik Andersen faced only 14 shots altogether — the fewest by the Canucks this season in the opener of an eight-game homestand. Corey Perry missed his 15th straight game because of a sprained knee.

Ryan Getzlaf, who assisted on both Anaheim goals, got the puck to Devante Smith-Pelly at the edge of the crease and Ryan Miller made the save as the puck deflected off the blade of his stick. But Fowler was right there to bury the rebound for his third career overtime goal.

Panthers 6, Maple Leafs 4: Brad Boyes scored a tiebreaking power-play goal in host Florida's four-goal third period.

Willie Mitchell, Dmitry Ku-likov and Scottie Upshall also scored in the third for the Panthers, who have won four of five. Jonathan Huberdeau had a goal and an assist, and Jussi Jokinen had two assists. James van Riemsdyk had a goal

and an assist for Toronto, which has dropped four of five. James Reimer made 29 saves. Florida and Toronto combined

for six goals in the second, but the Panthers controlled the final period.

Kulikov started the rally when he whistled a shot past Reimer 2:45 into the third for his first goal of the season. Mitchell, another defenseman, then used a pass from Huberdeau to tie it at 4.

Boyes tipped in Kulikov's shot from the point for the game-winning goal at 16:45, and Upshall added an empty-netter for his fifth of the season.

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference

At	lanti	c Di	visi	on			
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Tampa Bay	37	22	11	4	48	119	97
Detroit	36	19	- 8	9	47	103	89
Montreal	35	22	11	2	46	95	84
Toronto	36	20	13	3	43	122	108
Florida	33	16	9	8	40	79	86
Boston	36	18	15	3	39	93	97
Ottawa	35	14	14	7	35	92	97
Buffalo	36	14	19	3	31	73	118
Metr	opoli	itan	Div	risio	on		
Pittsburgh	35	22	8	5	49	108	83
N.Y. Islanders	35	23	11	ĩ	47	108	98
N.Y. Rangers	33	19	10	4	42	100	84
Washington	35	18	11	6	42	102	90
Philadelphia	35	14	15	6	34	98	105
Columbus	34	15	16	3	33	86	109
New Jersev	37	12	18	7	31	79	107
Carolina	35	10	21	4	24	71	95

Western Conference

Central Division												
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF GA						
Chicago	36	24	10	2	50	112 74						
Nashville	34	23	9	2	48	99 71						
St. Louis	35		11		45	103 90						
Winnipeg	36	19	10	7	45	92 84						
Minnesota		16			36							
Dallas	34	15	14	5	35	99 116						
Colorado	35		14	8	34	92 106						
Pa	cific	: Di	risi	on								
Anaheim	38	24	8	6	54							
Vancouver	34	20	11	3	43	100 93						
Los Angeles		18			43	100 89						
San Jose	36	19	12	5	43	100 93						
	37	19			41	108 99						
Arizona	35	13	18	4	30	82 113						
Edmonton	36	7	22	7	21	76 125						
NOTE: Two points for a win, one point												
for overtime los	ss.											

Sunday's game Florida 6, Toronto 4

Florida S, Sundaya games
Florida S, Vuncouver I, O'R.
Anaheim Z, Vancouver I, O'R.
Detroit Monday's games
Pittiburgh at New Jersey
Washington at N.Y. Islanders
Montreal at Carolina
Foronto at Tampa Bay
Colorado at St. Louis
Colorado at St. Louis
O'N. Rangers at Dallas
N. Rangers at Dallas
Pittiburgh at Colorado
Nashville at Chicago
Nashville at Chicago
Nashville at Chicago
Nashville at Arizona
Montreal Berger
St. Louis at Mashville
Los Angeles at Edmonton

Los Angeles at Edmonton Vancouver at San Jose

DUCKS 2	, va	HUCKS		Įυ	ш,	1
Vancouver			0	1	0	0-1
Anaheim			0	0	1	1-2

Anablem 0 0 1 1-2
Second Period -1, Vancouver, Weber 3
(Hansen, Burrows), 2:04,
Third Period -2, Anaheim, Beauchemin 1 (detzlaf), 6:52,
Manabeim, 1-6:04,
Second Period -2, Anaheim, Fowler 5
(Smith-Pelly, Geztlaf), 2:42,
Shots on Goal-Vancouver 8:4-2:0-14,
Anaheim 7:1-0:11-3-31,
Power-play opportunities – Vancouver
Goalies – Vancouver, Miller 18:7-1 (31
shots-29 saves), Anaheim, Andersen 20-55 (14:13).

A-17,374 (17,174). T-2:25.

Panthers 6. Maple Leafs 4

(Jokinen), 245. S. Florida, Mitchell 2 (Huberdeau), 1059, 9, Florida, Boyes 6 (Kulikov, Jokinen), 16:45 (pp), 10, Florida, Usshall 5 (Kopecky, MacKenzie), 18:35 (en), Shots on Goal—Toronto 3-10-4—17. Florida 10 and 10 a

A-17.877 (17.040), T-2:34.





RYAN REMIORZ, THE CANADIAN PRESS/AF

The United States' Auston Matthews scores on Germany goaltender Ilya Sharipov during a round-robin game at the hockey World Junior Championshipon Sunday in Montreal. The U.S. won 6-0.

Briefly

US routs Germany in juniors

MONTREAL - University of Michigan forward Dylan Larkin had two goals and an assist in the United States' 6-0 victory over Germany on Sunday night in the World Junior Championship.

The University of Minnesota's Hudson Fasching had a goal and an assist, Jack Eichel, Auston Matthews and Sonny Milano also scored, and Brandon Halverson made 14 saves

"I thought we played a real good hockey game," coach Mark Osiecki said. "We were a bit sloppy in the first period, but came out in the second and third periods and played much better.'

Eichel plays for Boston University, Milano for the Plymouth Whalers in the Ontario Hockey League and the 17-year-old Matthews, from Scottsdale, Ariz., is a member of the U.S. National Under-18 Team. Halverson plays for Sault Ste. Marie in the OHL.

The Americans are second in Group A with five points after opening Friday with a 2-1 shootout victory over Finland. The Americans were to play Slovakia Wednesday night against Canada. The Canadians top the group with six points. Ilja Sharipov made 47 saves for

Germany, coming off a 4-0 loss to Canada on Saturday night. In Group B in Toronto, Pavel

Buchnevich had a goal and two assists and Igor Shestyorkin made 32 saves to help Russia beat Switzerland 7-0. Russia is second in the group

with five points after opening with a shootout victory over Denmark on Friday. Sweden tops the group with six points The top two teams in each group

will advance to the quarterfinals.

Shiffrin dominates slalom for 10th win

KUEHTAI, Austria - American teenager Mikaela Shiffrin won a women's World Cup slalom in dominating style Monday for her 10th career victory.

The Olympic champion posted the fastest time in both runs and finished in an aggregate 1 minute, 43.39 seconds.

Second-place Sarka Strachova of the Czech Republic was 0.80 behind, and Wendy Holdener of Switzerland came third, trailing by 0.92.

Shiffrin has won the World Cup slalom title for the past two seasons but Monday's win was her first slalom podium of the season.

MLB average salary exceeds \$3.8 million

NEW YORK - Major League Baseball's average salary shot up to more than \$3.8 million this year following the steepest rise in more than a decade, putting big leaguers on track to ton the \$4 million barrier for the first time in 2015

The Major League Baseball Players Association said the average salary was \$3,818,923, up from \$3,386,212 last year. The 12.78 percent hike was the biggest since a 12.83 percent rise from 2000 to 2001.

The average topped \$1 million for the first time in 1992, crossed the \$2 million barrier in 2001 and the \$3 million mark in 2010.



Veteran operator Pike Logan and partner Jennifer Cahill learn that their latest actions have gotten them fired, despite having saved thousands of innocent lives. But their shock and fury are cut short when a terrorist organization starts targeting military relatives — and taking them hostage.

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COLLEGE BASKETBALL/COLLEGE FOOTBALL



LINDSEY WASSON, THE SEATTLE TIMES/AP

Washington center Robert Upshaw, left, shoots against Stony Brook forward Jameel Warney on Sunday. Stony Brook won 62-57.

Roundup

Stony Brook stuns No. 13 Washington

The Associated Press

SEATTLE - Stony Brook traveled a long way for a huge victory.

Jameel Warney banked in a short runner with 30 seconds left to give Stony Brook its first lead, and the Long Island university overcame a 16-point deficit to stun No. 13 Washington 62-57 on Sunday night.

"This is our biggest win in program history," said Warney, who scored over Robert Upshaw, the nation's leading shot blocker.

It's only the second win ever against a team from a power conference for the America East school, which knocked off Penn State in 2006. After Stony Brook trailed by

as much as 16 Carson Puriefov hit a three-pointer from the left wing with 1:07 left to pull the Seawolves even at 57.

"I'm a confident player, I know I can make shots, big shots," said Puriefoy, who went 2-for-12 from the field. "I love to take the big shot, but I'm really glad I have great teammates around me (to) pick up the slack throughout the game.

Stony Brook (8-6) finished on a 17-2 run, holding Washington scoreless during the final 3:41. The Huskies (11-1) responded to Puriefoy's tying shot with a turnover and then completely missed the hoop on their attempt following Warney's go-ahead bucket.

Warney finished with 15 points, and Kameron Mitchell added 12 on 4-for-5 shooting from threepoint range.

Stony Brook overcame a poor shooting performance in the first half when it shot 2-for-9 from beyond the arc. The Seawolves started 3-for-15 from the floor and didn't hit a three-pointer until their sixth attempt.

"I thought we were getting decent looks," coach Steve Pikiell said. "Certainly, in a game like this against a great team, you're not going to get a lot better. I love

their defense, I think they're real good defensively, so I told our guys, you got to take the first one that becomes available.'

The Huskies, who were looking to get off to their best start ever under 13th-year coach Lorenzo Romar, had a double-digit lead for much of the night.

No. 6 Wisconsin 68, Buffalo 56: Frank Kaminsky had 25 points and 11 rebounds for host Wisconsin.

Sam Dekker added 13 points for Wisconsin (12-1), which opens Big Ten play Wednesday against Penn State. Justin Moss led four Bulls (7-3) in double figures with

Ño. 17 St. John's 82, Tulane **57:** Sir'Dominic Pointer had a career-high 24 points in St. John's victory over Tulane in the Brooklyn Hoops Winter Festival Tripleheader.

Pointer also added a careerhigh seven steals, grabbed four rebounds, had four assists and blocked two shots. The 25-point margin of victory was the larg-est for St. John's this season. The Red Storm have won seven straight and are 11-1 for the first time since 1985-86.

No. 23 Northern Iowa 74, South Dakota St 63: Nate Buss scored 14 points Northern Iowa closed out nonconference play with a victory over visiting South Dakota State

Wes Washpun added 12 points, and Seth Tuttle had 11 for the Panthers (11-1). George Marshall had 16 points for South Dakota State (9-5)

Army 93, Coast Guard 48: Nathan Dodge scored 20 points and hit five of host Army's 14 three-pointers in a rout.

Luke Morrison also hit five from deep to finish with 15 points for the Black Knights, who are 9-2 for the first time since the 2009-10 season.

The Black Knights are now 17-0 all-time against the Coast Guard and head into Patriot League play on a three-game winning streak.

Louisville not saying which frosh QB to starť Belk Bowl

The Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. - Coach Bobby Petrino won't say who will start at quarterback for Louisville in the Belk Bowl. He will concede this: Both Reggie Bonnafon and Kyle Bolin will play against Georgia.

"We're going to let you see when they run out there who the starter is," Petrino said with a coy smile

Bonnafon, a freshman, became Louisville's starter Nov. 8 after Will Gardner tore his anterior cruciate ligament. He has started five games but injured his knee in the season finale against Kentucky. That's when Bolin, a redshirt freshman, stepped in and threw for 381 yards and three touchdowns, rallying the Cardinals (9-3, 5-3 ACC, No. 21 CFP) to a 44-40 victory. Both quarterbacks took reps

last week in practice. "We're real fortunate that we have two guys who have play-

ing experience and have won big games for us," Petrino said. Petrino said the team's plan for

Tuesday night's game is subject to change. "If somebody is hot, you keep

him in there and give him more reps," he said. Neither Louisville quarterback

attended media day. They were unavailable for comment. Offensive lineman Jamon

Brown said even the players don't know who'll start. "Whoever is in we are 100 per-

cent behind them, but we are anxious as anybody to find out who is the starter," Brown said. "Coach Petrino does a good job of not tipping his hand.

The two quarterbacks bring different styles. Bonnafon is more of a running quarterback who brings the read option into play. Bolin's strength is his passing ability.

Some things to watch between No. 13 Georgia and No. 20 New play caller: Georgia quar-

terback Hutson Mason joked that practice has been a "tad bit quieter" this week with former offensive coordinator Mike Bobo leaving to become head coach at Colorado State. That means tight ends coach John Lilly will be handling play-calling for the Bulldogs

Notre Dame vs. LSU

AFN-Sports

9 p.m. Tuesday CET

5 a.m. Wednesday JKT



Louisville coach Bobby Petrino would not say which quarterback will start Tuesday when the Cardinals face Georgia in the Belk Bowl.

(9-3 6-2 SEC No. 13 CFP) "It is a little different when you

are with a guy for five years and you are used to having him in your ear." Mason said. Mason described Lilly

'calmer.' Georgia coach Mark Richt

said he has spent more time than usual this week with the quarterbacks discussing strategy now that Bobo is gone. Richt said the team hasn't

begun its search for a new offensive coordinator. The Parker factor: Regardless

of who is playing quarterback for the Cardinals, they'll undoubtedly be looking to get the ball to wide receiver DeVante Parker, who may be the most dangerous player on the field. The 6-foot-3, 202-pound Park-

er battled through a broken foot early in the season and caught 35 passes for 735 yards and five touchdowns in just five games.

"He is a big, physical presence and a guy who is a mismatch for really any defensive back in the country," Richt said. "He's going to be very difficult to deal with.

Dyer ineligible: Louisville senior running back Michael Dyer's college career will end unceremoniously after he was ruled academically ineligible for the

Belk Bowl

Dyer transferred to Louisville last year from Arkansas Baptist College and was the fourth-leading rusher for the Cardinals with 481 vards and five touchdowns. The former Auburn star rushed for more than 1.000 vards in both of his seasons with the Tigers and was named the MVP of the 2011 BCS championship game.

Brandon Radcliff is expected to start for Louisville

Letting it go: Mason and others on the Bulldogs roster have the challenge of moving past a heartbreaking loss to Georgia Tech, which came two days after a Missouri win took the Bulldogs out of the running for the SEC championship game.
"It stinks," Mason said. "You

throw a pick against Tech and you have to remember that for the rest of your life."

Familiar face: The Bulldogs will face a familiar face in Louisville defensive coordinator Todd Grantham, who held that same position at Georgia from 2010-2013.

"We're not exactly sure what he's going to do," Richt said. "Most people will run what they ran all year. But I'm sure Todd will have some things up his sleeve."

Bowls on AFN











Belk Bowl Georgia vs. Louisville AFN-Sports 12:30 a.m. Tuesday CET

8:30 a.m. Wednesday JKT





Foster Farms Bowl Maryland vs. Stanford AFN-Sports 4 a.m. Tuesday CET Noon Wednesday JKT

NFI



JULIO CORTEZ/AP

New York Jets owner Woody Johnson fired head coach Rex Ryan, left, and general manager John Idzik, right, on Monday after one of the most disappointing seasons in franchise history.

Briefly

Jets fire head coach Ryan

The Associated Press

FLORHAM PARK, N.J. -Woody Johnson decided to completely clean house.

The New York Jets owner fired coach Rex Ryan and general man-ager John Idzik on Monday after the Jets (4-12) failed to make the postseason for a fourth straight season

Rvan was 50-52, including 4-2 in the postseason, in his six seasons with the Jets. His first few years were filled with guarantees, strong statements and two consecutive trips to the AFC title game. But, in the end, there were not enough wins to back up all the big talk.

Idzik lasted just two seasons after replacing the fired Mike Tannenbaum in 2013.

Mike Smith was fired as the

Atlanta Falcons' coach Monday. one day after the end of his second straight losing season.

Atlanta had a 66-46 regularseason record with Smith and won two NFC South titles. ■ The Chicago Bears have fired

general manager Phil Emery and coach Marc Trestman after missing the playoffs for the seventh time in the past eight years. The changes come after the

Bears went 5-11 in a mostly dismal season. Trestman is out after going 13-19 in two seasons while Emery lasted just three years.

Jaguars' Marks tears knee ligament in finale

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — Jacksonville Jaguars defensive tackle Sen'Derrick Marks, the team's

best defensive player, tore his anterior cruciate ligament in his right knee during Sunday's season finale at Houston.

Marks will have surgery after the swelling subsides. He will miss the entire offseason, but hopes to be back during training camp.

Bills quarterback Orton planning to retire

ORCHARD PARK, N.Y. — Ouarterback Kyle Orton has informed the Buffalo Bills that he plans to retire.

The team announced Orton's decision in a news release issued Monday. Orton, called his retirement a "family decision," and says he wants to go home to be a father. Orton went 7-5 in closing the season as the Bills starter.

Secure: Broncos knock off Raiders to earn first-round bye

"It feels great," Carolina running back Jonathan Stewart "I mean, it's a blessing and you just have to cherish these moments right now. ... We just believed and played our hearts out and this is where we are."

Dallas (12-4) already owned the NFC East crown and won at Washington 44-17

Pittsburgh (11-5) took down Cincinnati 27-17 to wrap up the AFC North. The Bengals (10-5-1) got a wild card. Denver's 47-14 win over Oak-

land gave the Broncos (12-4) a first-round bye as AFC West champion. New England, also 12-4 with a victory over Denver, has the top seed, even though it fell at home to Buffalo 17-9. Indianapolis already had the

AFC South title; it beat Tennessee 27-10.

In case you missed it, here are the other top topics after the NFL's 17th - and final - regular-season Sunday:

Flops: Given a chance to make the playoffs by winning, the Chargers and Falcons flopped. San Diego had more turnovers (two) than points (zero) in the second half of a 19-7 loss to Kansas City, while Atlanta rolled over in a 34-3 defeat against Carolina.

Cowboys records: As the NFC East champ Cowboys routed the rival Redskins 44-17, DeMarco Murray broke Emmitt Smith's franchise record for rushing yards in a season by getting to 1,845, and Dez Bryant eclipsed Terrell Owens' team mark for touchdown catches in a season by grabbing his 16th. Dallas is only the sixth team since 1978 to go 8-0 in away games - and four of the other five reached the Super Bowl.

What About Watt: It's been more than a quarter-century since a defensive player won NFL MVP honors (Giants linebacker Lawrence Taylor in 1986), and



Houston Texans defensive end J.J. Watt celebrates after sacking Jacksonville Jaguars quarterback Blake Bortles for a safety during the second half of Sunday's game in Houston. Watt finished the season with 20½ sacks, becoming the first player in NFL history with two 20-sack

Rodgers might have sealed his second award with his backfrom-injury performance Sunday. But Houston defensive end J.J. Watt completed a remarkable individual season in a 23-17 win over Jacksonville, adding three sacks, a forced fumble and a safety. Watt's 201/2 sacks make him the first player with a pair of 20-sack seasons.

We're No. 1: Well, sort of. While some clubs were concerned with playoff permutations, Tampa Bay was busy letting a lead slip away in a 23-20 loss to New Orleans that gave the Buccaneers the No. 1 overall pick in next year's draft. In need of a quarterback, the Bucs could end up with Heisman Trophy winners Marcus Mariota or Jameis Winston.



管3話報補物羽司 NFL SCOREBOARD

American Conference						
		Eas	t			
	w	L	T	Pct	PF	ΡΔ
v-New England	112	4	ō	.750	468	313
Buffalo	9	7	ō	.563	343	289
Miami	8	8	ō	.500	388	373
N.Y. Jets	4	12	ō	.250	283	401
		Sou	th			
v-Indianapolis	11	5	0	.688	458	369
Houston	9	7	ō	.563	372	307
Jacksonville		13	0	.188	249	412
Tennessee	2	14	0	.125	254	438
		Nor	th			
v-Pittsburgh	11	5	0	.688	436	368
x-Cincinnati	10	5	1	.656	365	344
x-Baltimore	10	6	0	.625	409	302
Cleveland	7	9	0	.438	299	337
West						
y-Denver	12	4	0	.750	482	354
Kansas City	9	7	0	.563	353	281
San Diego		7	0	.563	348	348
Oakland	3	13	0	.188	253	452
National Conference						

National Conference

y-Dallas	12	4	0	.750			
Philadelphia		6		.625			
N.Y. Giants	6	10	0	.375	380	400	
Washington	4	12	0	.250	301	438	
		Sou	th				
v-Carolina		- 8		.469	339	374	
New Orleans		9		.438			
Atlanta	á	10	ň	.375	381	417	
Tampa Bay	ž	14	ŏ	.125			
тапра вау		Nor	Hh.	.125	211	410	
v-Green Bav	12		0	.750	486	2/10	
x-Detroit	11	- 2	ŏ	.688			
Minnesota		. 9		.438			
Chicago		11	.0	.313	319	442	
		We					
	12	4	0	.750	394		
x-Arizona	11	5	0	.688	310	299	
San Francisco	- 8	- 8	0	.500			
	6			.375	324	354	
x-clinched playoff spot							
y-clinched division							
Sunday's games							

Sunday's games Indianapolis 27, Tennessee 10 Houston 23, Jacksonville 17 Karnas City 12, San Diego 7 Tennessee 10 Houston 23, Jacksonville 17 Karnas City 12, San Diego 7 Leveland 10 Dallas 44, Washington 17 N. J. Met 27, Minim 2 January 18, N. J. Galta 5, San Francisco 20, Artzona 17 Senero 18, N. Galta 15 Senero 19, Jackson 17, Denver 47, Dakland 17 Denver 47, Dakland 18, Dervil 20, Dervil 20 Carolina 34, Atlanta 3 Pirtisburgh 27, Cincinnati 17 Sunday Steelers 27, Bengals 17

Cincinnati 7 3 0 7-17 Pittsburgh 7 13 0 7-27 Pittsburgh 7 13 0 7-27 Pit-A Brown 71 Junt return (Suisham Kick), 103-8 cm 71 Junt return (Suisham Kick), 103-8 cm 71 Junt 7 pass from Dalton (Nugent Nick), 2 scond Quarter Cin-Fo Nugent Si 12-32 per Si 12-32 per

A-64,697.			
	Cin	Pit	
First downs	19	18	
Total Net Yards	337	346	
Rushes-vards	29-116	18-29	
Passing	221	317	
Punt Returns	1-6	2-84	
Kickoff Returns	5-114	2-52	
Interceptions Ret.	2-2	2-34	
Comp-Att-Int	27-38-2	24-39-2	
Sacked-Yards Lost	3-23	0-0	

Punts Fumbles-Lost Penalties-Yards Time of Possess 1-10 25:02 Time of Possession 34:58 25:02 INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS Rushing—Cincinnati, Hill 23-100, Bernard 3-8, Dalton 3-8. Pittsburgh, Bell 8-20, Harris 5-7, Roethlisberger 4-3, Archer 1-(minus 1).

3-39.7

(minus 1).
Passing—Cincinnati, Dalton 27-38-2-244. Pittsburgh, Roethlisberger 24-38-1-244. Pittsburgh. Roethilsberger 24-38-1-317, Wingo J-1-10. Changard. Green 8-82, Bernard 7-56, Hewitt 3-31, Gresham 3-20, Tate 2-22, Hill 2-10, Sanu 1-16, Sanzenbacher 1.7 Pittsburgh. A.Brown 7-128, Bell 6-80, Miller 3-41, Wheedon 3-17, Archer 2-19, Bryant 1-21, Johnson 1-11,

Pouncey 1-0.

Missed field goals—Cincinnati, Nu gent 50 (WR).

Broncos 47, Raiders 14

7 0 7 0-14 10 10 10 17-47

First Quarter

Den—FG Barth 49, 9:40.

Den—Anderson 11 run (Barth kick), 5:37. Oak-McGill 18 fumble return (Janikowski kick), 3:42.
Second Quarter
Den-Anderson 1 run (Barth kick), 13:08.

:08. Den—FG Barth 36, :23.
Third Quarter
Den—Anderson 25 run (Barth kick), 14:08. Oak-Olawale 1 pass from Carr (Jan-

Nak-Olawale 1 pass from Carr (Janikowski kick), 8:55.

Den-FG Barth 35, 5:38.

Den-FG Barth 21, 10:18.
Den-TLOTTer 20 fumble return (Barth kick), 4:48.

Kick), 4:48.

Barth kick), 1:56.

A-76,929.

	Oak	Den		
First downs	10	25		
Total Net Yards	199	451		
Rushes-vards	18-67	34-142		
Passing	132	309		
Punt Returns	2-23	5-37		
Kickoff Returns	5-103	1-76		
Interceptions Ret.	0-0	1-5		
Comp-Att-Int	18-36-1	23-39-0		
Sacked-Yards Lost	3-26	1-3		
Punts	9-46.4	3-46.3		
Fumbles-Lost	2-1	2-1		
Penalties-Yards	9-86	1-16		
Time of Possession	26:59	33:01		
INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS				

RINDIVIDUAL STATISTICS
Rushing—Oakland, Murray 10-37, McFadden 4-13, Reece 1-11, Carr 3-6. Denwer, Anderson 13-87, Hillman 15-56, Stewart 4-5, Osweller 1-(minus 1), Manning
1-(minus S), Manning
1-(minus S), Passing—Oakland, Carr 18-36-1-158.

2-2-0-39. Severité Receiving—Oakland. Murray 4-60, Receie 3-30, Rivera 2-26, J.Jones 2-17, Holmes 2-10, McFadden 2-6, Butler 1-6, Thompkins 1-2, Olawale 1-1, **Denver**, D.Thomas 8-115, Sanders 6-73, Green 3-46, Welker 2-42, Anderson 2-20, Latimer 1-14, Hillman 1-2.

Packers 30, Lions 20 Detroit Green Bay 0 7 7 6-20 7 7 7 9-30

7 7 7 9-30 First Quarter GB-Hyde 55 punt return (Crosby kick), 4:49.

kick), 4:49. Spunt return (Crosby kick), 2:24. Scend Quarter GB—Cobb 4 pass from A.Rodgers (Crosby kick), 2:24. Det—C.Johnson 20 pass from Stafford Prater kick), 2:rd Quarter Det—C.Johnson 4 pass from Stafford (Prater kick), 2:rd Quarter Gentler kick), 7:34 Quarter (Crosby kick), 3:24. GB—Cobb 13 pass from A.Rodgers (Crosby kick) Stafford (Crosby kick), 3:24. Spund (Cro

Fourth Quarter
GB—A.Rodgers 1 run (Crosby kick),

8:45.

GB—Team safety, 2:32.

Det—Riddick 6 pass from Stafford (run failed), 1:45.

A—78,408.

Det GB

	Det	GE
First downs	23	24
Total Net Yards	313	377
Rushes-yards	23-111	38-152
Passing	202	225
Punt Returns	1-14	1-55
Kickoff Returns	5-126	1-0
Interceptions Ret.	0-0	0-0
Comp-Att-Int	20-41-0	18-23-0
Sacked-Yards Lost	2-15	1-7
Punts	4-38.0	3-39.0
Fumbles-Lost	2-1	2-2
Penalties-Yards	10-53	5-40
Time of Possession	25:42	34:18
INDIVIDITAL	STATISTICS	

Seahawks 20, Rams 6

Sea—Irvin 49 interception return (Hauschka kick), 9:50.

A-68,453.		
	StL	Sea
irst downs	15	16
Total Net Yards	245	354
Rushes-vards	19-42	34-132
Passing	203	222
Punt Returns	0-0	2-7
Kickoff Returns	3-80	2-52
nterceptions Ret.	1-18	2-57
Comp-Átt-Int	26-37-2	17-25-1
Sacked-Yards Lost	4-40	3-17
Punts	5-49.4	3-40.3
umbles-Lost	2-1	3-1
Penalties-Yards	6-45	2-20
Time of Possession	28:49	31:11
INDIVIDUA	I STATISTICS	

49ers 20, Cardinals 17

Arizona 7 10 0 0-17 San Francisco 7 6 7 0-20 First Ouarter

San Francisco First Quarter
Ari—Floyd 20 pass from Lindley (Catarizario kick), 20 pass from Lindley (Catsept Second 7, 12-23
SF—Boldin 76 pass from Kapernick
(Dawson kick), 9:24,
SF—FG Dawson 37, 6:04,
Ari—FG Catanzaro 36, 1:35,
Ari—FG Data Sfrom Lindley (Catarizaro kick), 366.

Third Quarter
SF-Miller 3 pass from Kaepernick
) awson kick), :25.
A-70,699.

Ari 26 397 First downs 395 33-206 189 0-0 4-101 Total Net Yards 397 25-98 299 2-22 3-49 0-0 23-40-3 2-17 Rushes-yards Passing Punt Returns Kickoff Return Kickoff Returns Interceptions Ret. Comp-Att-Int Sacked-Yards Lost 3-7 15-26-0

(D:

| Sackéd-Yaros Lost | 2-15 | Furbles-Lost | 0-0 | 0-0 | Penalties-Vards | 3-35,7 | 4-49,0 | 0-0 | Penalties-Vards | 3-21 | 10-78 | Time of Possession | 30:36 | 29:24 | MINDIDUAL STATISTICS | Rushing-Arizona, K.Williams | 17-67, 734) or 7-25, Hughes 1-5. San Francisco, Gore 25-144, Kaepernick 7-63, Alf.Smith - 1/mining 1.10 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 | 10-15 |

Göre 25-144, Kaepernick 7-63, Alf.Smith Irdmius 1). 1 Sassing-Arizona, Lindley 23-39-3-31-6, Sassing-Arizona, Endley 23-39-3-31-6, 15-26-0-204, San Francisco, Kaepernick F. 26-0-204, Since 32, Fells 2-39, JBFown 4-51, Gira 21, Fells 2-39, JBFown 4-51, Gira 21, Fells 2-39, 10, Carlson 1-6, Gira 21, 1-6, San Francisco, Crabtree 4-4, Miller 3-17, Boldin 2-81, Gore 2-5, Patton 1-35, Lloyd 1-14, V.Davis 1-9, Alf.Smith 1-36, Lloyd 1-14, V.Davis 1-9, Alf.Smith 1-14, Lloyd 1-14, V.Dav

Panthers 34, Falcons 3

Carolina 10 14 10 0-34
Atlanta 10 10 3 0 0-3
First Quarter
Car-Fig Gano 21, 7:50.
Car-Dickson 5 pass from Newton
(Gano kick), 104.

:04. Second Quarter (Garlo Kick), 3-0-4 on Quarter
Atl—FG Broant 21, 10:26.
Car—Harper 31 interception return
(Gano kick), 4:18.
Car—Newton 4 run (Gano kick), 1:47.
Third Quarter
Car—FG Gano 48, 8:43.
Car—Boston 84 interception return
(Gano kick), :07.
A=71,015.

First downs	17	1
Total Net Yards	306	28
Rushes-vards	35-194	16-6
Passing	112	22
Punt Returns	2-6	0-
Kickoff Returns	1-20	3-10
Interceptions Ret.	2-115	0-
Comp-Att-Int	10-16-0	29-47-
Sacked-Yards Lost	1-2	6-3
Punts	3-48.3	5-49.
Fumbles-Lost	0-0	1-
Penalties-Yards	5-36	6-3
Time of Possession	31:13	28:4
INDIVIDUA	L STATISTICS	

Rushing-Carolina, Newton 2016, Research 2016, Research 2016, Revent 1917, Revent 1918, Revent 19

Chiefs 19, Chargers 7

San Diego 0 7 0 0 - 7 Kansas City First Quarter KC-FG Santos 43, 6:33.

Second Quarter
KC-Kelce fumble recovery in end zone (Santos kick), 12:50.

one (Santos kick), 12:50. SD—Oliver 1 run (Novak kick), 10:50. KC—FG Santos 21, 3:58. KC—FG Santos 27, :33. Third Quarter KC—FG Santos 31, 8:24. A—73.952

	SD	KC
First downs	21	15
Total Net Yards	361	251
Rushes-yards	25-112	26-111
Passing	249	140
Punt Returns	3-13	4-69
Kickoff Returns	4-79	2-55
Interceptions Ret.	0-0	2-0
Comp-Att-Int	20-34-2	16-27-0
Sacked-Yards Lost	7-42	4-17
Punts	5-42.0	5-51.2
Fumbles-Lost	1-1	1-0
Penalties-Yards	10-67	7-46
Time of Possession	31:21	28:39

Penalties-Yards II 10-67 7-46
Time of PMON 15-75 10-67 28-39
Time of PMON 15-75 10-67
Time of PMON

Eagles 34, Giants 26 Philadelphia 14 3 7 10-34 N.Y. Giants 10 6 3 7-26

First Quarter NYG-A.Williams 1 run (J.Brown kick),

12:11. Phi-J.Matthews 44 pass from San-

Phi—J.Matthews 44 pass from Sanhere (Parkey kick), 11:00.

The Committee of the Committee

Fourth Quarter
Phi—Polk 1 run (Parkey kick), 13:08.
NYG—Beckham Jr. 63 pass from
E.Manning (J.Brown kick), 11:47.
Phi—FG Parkey 39, 7:56. A-79.150.

	Phi	NYG
irst downs	23	22
otal Net Yards	426	505
tushes-yards	32-164	25-76
assing	262	429
unt Returns	2-15	0-0
lickoff Returns	2-40	3-68
nterceptions Ret.	1-40	1-11
omp-Att-Int	23-36-1	28-53-1
acked-Yards Lost	4-30	0-0
unts	7-41.7	7-35.9
umbles-Lost	0-0	1-0
enalties-Yards	5-35	8-106
ime of Possession	25:23	34:37

Rushing—Philadelphia, McCoy 17-99, Polk 7-38, Sanchez 7-52, Sproles 1-5, N.Y. Giants, A.Williams 15-43, Jennings 10-33, Passing—Philadelphia, Sanchez 23-36-1-292, N.Y. Giants, E.Manning 28-53-

1-429, Receiving—Philadelphia, J.Matthews 8-105, Ertz 4-56, Maclin 3-49, Sproles 3-23, Cooper 2-37, McCoy 1-15, Huff 1-6, Celek 1-1, N.Y. Giants, Beckham Jr. 12-185, Ran-dle 6-158, Jennings 3-21, A.Williams 3-19, Donnell 2-26, Parker 2-20.

Cowboys 44, Redskins 17

Dallas Washington First Quarter 17 10 0 17-44 7 3 0 7-17

First Quarter

Dal—FG Bailey 36, 10:15, or Griffin III
(Forbath kick), 8:42.

Dal—Bryant 65 pass from Romo (Bailey kick), 6:25.

Dal—Bryant 52 pass from Romo (Bailey kick), 6:25.

Dal—Bryant 52 pass from Romo (Bailey kick), 2:07.

Second Quarter
Dal—FG Balley 32, 11:30.
Dal—Murray 9 run (Balley kick), 8:10.
Was—FG Forbath 25, 1:20.
Fourth Quarter
Was—Griffin III 2 run (Forbath kick),
6:45.

6:45. Dal—FG Bailey 23, 3:31. Dal—Spencer 5 fumble return (Bailey kick), 3:12. Dal—Randle 65 run (Bailey kick), 1:40. **A**—80,897.

First downs Total Net Yards Rushes-yards Passing Punt Returns 20 457 26-174 283 2-12 2-55 20 413 24-104 309 2-15 6-119

Interceptions Ret. Comp-Att-Int Sacked-Yards Lost 2-39 22-34-1 1-9 27-41-2 3-27 4-44.0 Punts 4-43.0 4-49.0 Fumbles-Lost 1-0 2-2.2 Penalties-Yards 7-48 9-101 Time of Possession 30:4 29:36 INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS Rushing-Dallas, Murray 20-100, Randle 4-69, Dumbar 1-4, Harris 1-1. Washing-ton, Morris 12-43, Helu Jr. 6-42, Griffin III

ton, worths 12-45, rieru Jr. 6-42, Uniffilifi 19-Passing-Dallas, Romo 2.2-34-1-299. Washington, Griffin III 27-41-2-336. Washington, Griffin III 27-41-2-336. Jr. 2006 — Dallas, Zesaley 6-57. Ryant 4-99. Williams 3-65. Murray 3-21, Randle 13-1, Hanna 1-2, Washington, Red 9-70, Helu Jr. 4-41. Moss 3-25. Jack-son 2-86, Garcon 2-53. Morris 2-19, Paul 2-19, Young 1-9, Grant 1-7, Roberts 1-7.

Jets 37. Dolphins 24

N.Y. Jets Miami 7 7 10 13-37 3 14 7 0-24 First Quarter Mia—FG Sturgis 37, 6:13. NYJ—Owusu 23 run (Folk kick), 3:11.

Second Quarter Mia-Dan.Thomas 1 run (Sturgis kick),

10:44. NYJ-Ivory 8 pass from Smith (Folk NYJ-Ivory 8 pass non sand (kick), 644, Mia-Clay 23 pass from Tannehill (Sturgis kick), 43, Third Quarter Mia-Miller 97 run (Sturgis kick),

12:51. NYJ-Decker 74 pass from Smith (Folk

kick), 11:35. NYJ-FG Folk 26, 6:35.

NYJ-FG Folk 25, 4:12.

NYJ-FG Folk 25, 14:12.

NYJ-Gumberland 23 pass from Smith (Folk kick), 3:22.

NYJ-FG Folk 39, :31.

A 70,220.

Mia First downs Total Net Yards Rushes-yards 494 34-104 387 20-179 Kickoff Returns
Interceptions Ret.
Comp-Att-Int
Sacked-Yards Lost
Punts
Fumbles-Lost
Penalties-Yards 5-120 4-145 0-0 21-27-0 23-39-0 7-51 2-44 0 5-50.0 1-1 5-40 Time of Possession 28-44

Ime of Possession 31:16 28:34 Rushimson/Pipular Stratis 13:29, Owusu 1-23, C.Johnson 1-20, Smith 5-18, Kerley 2-11, Conner 1-20, Smith 5-18, Kerley 2-11, Conner 2-3, B.Powell 1-0, Miami, Miller 19-178, Dan.Thomas 1-1. Passing -N.Y. Jets, Smith 20-25-0-358, Quigley 1-1-0-38, Kerley 0-1-0-0, Miami, Tannehill 23-39-0-259.

Houston 23, Jaguars 17 Jacksonville 10 0 7 0-17

First Quarter er 10 pass from Keenum

Houston First Quarter 7 7 0 9–22 8 Mouston First Quarter 10 pass from Keenum (Bullock kick), 10:23 5, 60:2 1 Mouston First Quarter 10 pass from Centum (Scobee kick), 2:55. 1 Mouster 10:45 Mouster 10

First downs Total Net Yards Total Net Yards 233
Rushes-yards 14-121
Passing 11-12
Punt Returns 1-16
Kickoff Returns 1-33
Interceptions Ret. 15-34-0
Sacked-Yards Lost 5-28
Punts 6-49-3 39-123 235 2-12 2-43 0-0 25-35-1 3-15 6-46.3 Fumbles-Lost 1-0 4-25 20:12 Penalties-Yards Time of Possession

Time of Possession 20:12 39:48
INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS
Rushing—Jacksonville, Bortles 361, Todman 7-52, Gerhart 4-8. Houston,
Grimes 11-45, Blue 17-39, Foster 5-23, Grimes 11-45, Blue 17-39, Foster 5-23, Keenum 6-18, Bortles 14-33-147, Blue 11-10-23, Houston, Kee-num 25-35-1250, Receiving–Jacksonville, Shorts III 5-47, Todman 5-46, Hurns 2-15, Lee 2-8, Sanders 1-24. Houston, AJohnson 10-124, Blue 6-37, DJohnson 3-33, Grimes 2-

Hopkins 2-5, Foster 1-10, Griffin 1-8. Missed field goals—Jacksonville, Sc

Ravens 20. Browns 10 Cleveland 0 3 7 0-10 0 3 0 17-20

Baltimore Scord 0.0 3 0 17–20
Bal-Fc 10x0-20.sater
Bal-Fc 10x0-20.sater
Cle-FG Harritey 38, 2:32.
Third Quarter
Cle-West 2 run (Harritey kick), 3:29.
Bal-FG 10x0-20.sater
Bal-LSmith 16 pass from Flacco
Cle-Form 16 pass from Flacco
Cle-Form 16 pass from Flacco
Cle-Form 16 pass from Flacco
Clucker
kick), 3444, 2 pass from Flacco
Clucker
A-71,070. Cle-Bal

16 259 First downs Total Net Yards 419 28-129 290 1-0 3-62 29-109 150 Rushes-yards Passing Punt Returns Kickoff Returns 1-15 Interceptions Ret. Comp-Att-Int Sacked-Yards Lost 2-40 0-0 14-28-1 4-27 7-43.9 1-0 22-36-0 1-22

Punts Fumbles-Lost Penalties-Yards Time of Possession 6-46.5 2-0 8-55 7-58 30:43 INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

MONIPOUAL STATISTICS
RUSHing—Cleveland, West 18-94, Shaw
Rushing—Cleveland, West 18-94, Shaw
119, Pierce 8-8, Filson 9-1, West 19-1,
119, Pierce 8-8, Filson 9-1, West 19-1,
177, Baltimore, Flacco 22-56-9-112,
177, Baltimore, Flacco 22-56-9-112,
178, Baltimore, Flacco 22-56-9-112,
178, Baltimore, Flacco 22-56-9-112,
179, Baltimore, Flacco 22-56-9-112,
179, Baltimore, Flacco 22-56-9-112,
180, Marcon 1-17, Toussaint 1-7, Campanaro 1-17, Toussaint 1-7, Campanaro 1-17, Toussaint 1-7.

Colts 27, Tennessee 10

Indianapolis 7 10 0 10–27 Tennessee First Quarter Ind—Fleener 7 pass from Luck (Vinatieri kick), 2:54. Second Quarter Ind—Doyle 1 pass from Luck (Vinatieri

Ind—Doyle 1 pass from Luck (Vinatieri kick), 8:54, 164 6 pass from Whitehurst (Succop Rick), 8:07, 164 7 164

A 05,145.	Ind	Te
First downs	16	
Total Net Yards	378	19
Rushes-yards	30-64	24-14
Passing	314	5
Punt Returns	3-40	1-1
Kickoff Returns	3-130	5-14
Interceptions Ret.	0-0	0
Comp-Att-Int	23-35-0	13-31
Sacked-Yards Lost	1-1	4-2
Punts	5-40.6	7-54
Fumbles-Lost	1-0	4
Penalties-Yards	4-20	4-2
Time of Possession	33:26	26:3

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS
Rushing—Indianapolis, Herron 10-35,
Tipton 9-21, Richardson 6-11, Luck 15, Hasselbeck 4-(minus 8). Tennessee,
Greene 11-94, Whitehurst 4-19, Sankey 418, Wright 1-10, L-Washington 2-2, Battle
10, Balmer 1-(minus)

18, Wright 1-10. L'Washington 2-2, Battle
10, Palmer 1, Chimius 1),
11, Lord 10, Palmer 1, Chimius 1,
12, Lord 10, Palmer 1, Chimius 1,
12, Chimius 1, Chimius 1,
12, Chimius 1, Chimius 1,
13, Chimius 1, Chimius 1,
14, Chimius 1,
14

SEE SCOREBOARD ON PAGE 29

NFI

Scoreboard

FROM PAGE 28

NFL Playoffs

NFL Playoffs
Wild-card Playoffs
Wild-card Playoffs
Arizon at Carolina
Baltimore at Pittsburgh
Cincinnat sunday, and
Cincinnat sunday, and
Cincinnat sunday, and
Cincinnat sunday, and
Debrois at Playoffs
Divisional Playoffs
Arizona, Sunday, Ann. 11
Arizona/Dallas/Carolina at Green Bay
Indianapolis/Cincinnat/Pittsburgh at
Divisional Playoffs
Divis

Conference Championships Sunday, Jan. 18

Sunday, Jan. 18
Pro Bowl
Sunday, Jan. 25
Team Irvin vs. Team Carter
Super Bowl
Sunday, Feb. 1
At Glendale, Arizona
AFC champion vs. NFC champion

Vikings 13, Bears 9 0 3 3 3 9 3 0 7 3-13 First Quarter 'alsh 37, 4:59 Chicago Minnesota



Penalties-Yards 9-50 4-55
Time of Possession 31:33 28:27
Rushing-Chicago, Forte 17-51, Outlee
91, Banyard 6-20, Bridgewater 6-18, Fele
91, Banyard 18-20, Bridgewater 6-18, Fele
91, Banyard 11, Banyard 11

Bills 17, Patriots 9

Buffalo 7 10 0 0-17 New England 3 3 0 - 9 First Quarter

First Quarter
Buf—Woods 6 pass from Orton (Carenter kick), 11:59.
NE—FG Gostkowski 24, 3:02.
Second Quarter
Buf—Dixon 1 run (Carpenter kick),

First downs Total Net Yards Rushes-yards Passing Punt Returns 33-104 164 3-22 2-73 0-0 25-116 144 3-28 0-0 0-0 Kickoff Returns Interceptions Ret. 0-0 16-23-0 2-12 5-36.6 1-1 5-44 29:03 Comp-Att-Int Sacked-Yards Lost Punts Fumbles-Lost 18-33-0 4-26 4-43.5 0-0 Penalties-Yards Time of Possess



Bears tight end Martellus Bennett is tackled by Vikings strong safety Andrew Sendejo after catching a pass on Sunday in Minneapolis. The Vikings won 13.9.

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS Rushing-Buffalo, Jackson 18-58, Dix-on 7-27, Spiller 5-17, Watkins 1-5, Orton

on 7-27, Spiller 5-17, Watkins 15-, Orton 2-(minus 3). New England, Blount 10-62, Garoppolo 4-16, Bolden 5-15, LaFell 2-13, Brady 2-9, Verene 2-1, ron 1-2-2-0-176. Brassing—Buffalo, Orton 2-2-0-176. Brassing—Buffalo, Woods 4-39, Wattins 3-57, Gray 3-25, Chandler 1-20, Smith 1-18, Dixon 1-8, Jackson 1-4, Hogan 1-3, Spiller 1-2. Mew England, LaFell 4-70, Pymr 4-25, MmcMod 4-24, Vereen 3-14, Juhrlite 2-4, Wright 1-15.

Saints 23, Buccaneers 20 lew Orleans 0 7 0 16—23 ampa Bay 3 17 0 0—20

Tampa Bay
First Quarter
TB—FG Murray 39, 6:03.

Second Quarter
TB-Evans 6 pass from McCown (Mur-

TB—EVaris to pass recommendation and repair kick), 1125.

NO—K.Robinson 1 run (S.Graham kick), 548.

TB—Sims 8 run (Murray kick), 1:48.

TB—FG Murray 27, :06.

NO—Ingram 1 run (S.Graham kick), 14:07.

NO—Ingrain 1 No. 121 14:02. NO—Colston 36 pass from Brees (S.Graham kick), 1:57 NO—Galette safety, 1:05. A—59,952. NO TB

	NO	TB
First downs	20	18
Total Net Yards	338	280
Rushes-yards	23-70	39-183
Passing	268	97
Punt Returns	1-3	3-34
Kickoff Returns	1-19	3-85
Interceptions Ret.	1-2	3-(-3)
Comp-Att-Int	24-38-3	14-23-1
Sacked-Yards Lost	2-13	3-18
Punts	3-52.0	4-40.8
Fumbles-Lost	1-0	0-0
Penalties-Yards	2-15	4-23
Time of Possession	27:13	32:47
INDIVIDUA	LSTATISTICS	

NOVIDUAL STATSTICS
Rushing-New Orleans, Ingram 1457, KRobinson 7-15, Brees 2-(minus 2).
Tampa Bay, Martin 19-108, Sims 18-69,
McCown 2-6,
Passing-New Orleans, Brees 2-8-83Passing-New Orleans, Brees 2-8-83Receiving-New Orleans, Brees 2-8-8345, Stills 5-82, Colston 2-51, KRobinson 2-22, Watson 2-18, Cadet 2-9, Ingram 2-4,
54, Stills 5-82, Colston 2-51, KRobinson 2-22, Watson 2-18, Cadet 2-9, Ingram 1-24,
Jackson 1-11, Despard 1-10, Sims 1-6.



Ravens running back Justin Forsett (29) is tackled by Browns outside linebacker Paul Kruger, left, and defensive end Billy Winn in the first half Sunday in Baltimore. The Ravens won 20-10.

Ravens push into playoffs

BY DAVID GINSBURG The Associated Press

BALTIMORE - The Baltimore Ravens couldn't help watching the scoreboard in the midst of a game they had to win to reach the playoffs.

Baltimore earned a wild-card card berth Sunday by defeating the Cleveland Browns 20-10 and getting an assist halfway across the country.

To enter the postseason for the sixth time in seven years, the Ravens (10-6) needed to beat the Browns (7-9) and have San Diego lose in Kansas City.

A 17-point fourth quarter took care of the initial segment of that scenario, and the Chiefs did their part with a 19-7 win over the Chargers.

The Ravens knew what was happening in the other game. "There is no not seeing the

scoreboard. It's all over the place," quarterback Joe Flacco said.

"When we were down 10-3, yeah, we were paying attention, linebacker Terrell Suggs said 'We had to handle our business, and we did."

The first part of Baltimore's playoff equation seemed easy enough, given that the Browns had lost four straight, were starting rookie quarterback Connor Shaw and had dropped 12 of their past 13 against Baltimore. But the Rayens trailed 10-3 in

the fourth quarter. A field goal narrowed the gap,

and Baltimore took the lead on a 16-yard touchdown pass from Flacco to Torrey Smith with 7:33 Flacco's 2-yard TD throw to

Kamar Aiken with 3:44 remaining clinched it. Today it was struggle, strug-

gle, struggle," said Flacco, who went 8-for-9 for 161 yards and two touchdowns in the fourth quarter. He finished 22-for-36 for 312 yards, and the two TD passes gave him a career-high 27 for the season.

"Anything can happen when you get into the playoffs," he said. "I won't be surprised if in three weeks from now we're still sitting here playing."

For three quarters, the Ravens stumbled offensively — just as they did one week earlier in a 25-13 loss in Houston. As the game wore on, the home fans showed their dissatisfaction by booing before yet another Baltimore punt.

"These guys want to be sitting on the couch, having parties and cheering for us in a week." Flacco said.

Justin Forsett had 119 yards rushing for the Ravens, who will open on the road next weekend.

With quarterbacks Brian Hoyer and Johnny Manziel out with injuries, Shaw made his NFL debut for Cleveland. The Browns were also without suspended wide receiver Josh Gordon, and they placed cornerback Justin Gilbert on the inactive list after the rookie reportedly showed up late for a team meeting.

Despite being short-handed, the Browns stuck with a team playing with a postseason berth on the line.

"We had our chances. I thought we executed our plan well for three quarters and just couldn't finish," Pettine said. "In a lot of ways, it was a microcosm of our season."



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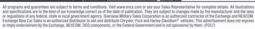




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NFL ROUNDUP





TAMPA, Fla. — Drew Brees and New Orleans wrapped up a disappointing season with a nice fourth-quarter comeback, that actually may help NFC South rival Tampa Bay in the long run.

The Buccaneers clinched the No. 1 overall pick in the 2015 Draft, blowing a 13-point halftime lead.

Tampa Bay (2-14) will have the top pick for the first time since 1987, when Vinny Testaverde was the selection

As promised, Bucs coach Lovie Smith gave more playing time than usual to some of his younger players, particularly in the second half, when the Saints outgained Tampa Bay 220 yards to 32

Brees shrugged off three interceptions, two of them in the third quarter, to lead a pair of scoring drives to get the victory. Mark Ingram scored on a 1-yard run early in the fourth quarter, and Brees threw a 36-yard touchdown pass to Marques Colston to put the Saints up with 1:57 remaining.





KANSAS CITY Mo - Kansas City rolled to a win that eliminated San Diego from contention, but the Chiefs failed to get the help they needed to qualify for the playoffs.

Justin Houston had four sacks for the Chiefs (9-7) to break Derrick Thomas' franchise record with 22 in the season, Cairo Santos kicked four field goals, and Chase Daniel played serviceably in place of injured quarterback Alex Smith, throwing for 157 yards without an interception.

Philip Rivers had 291 yards passing for the Chargers (9-7), going over 4,000 yards in a season for the sixth time in his career.





20

SANTA CLARA, Calif. - Colin Kaepernick threw a go-ahead 3yard touchdown pass to Bruce Miller late in the third quarter. Anguan Boldin caught a 76-yard TD pass and went over 1,000 yards receiving. Frank Gore ran for 144 yards on 25 carries to go over 1,000 yards rushing for the eighth time in 10 NFL seasons with San Francisco (8-8).

The Cardinals (11-5) missed the franchise's first 12-win season. Ryan Lindley threw TD passes of 20 and 41 yards in the first half, but couldn't deliver late.



Cowboys wide receiver Dez Bryant pulls in a touchdown pass under pressure from Washington Redskins cornerback David Amerson during the first half Sunday in Landover, Md. The Cowboys won 44-17.

and a touchdown. The Texans (9-

7) had a shot at making the play-

offs, but Baltimore claimed the

Johnson gave Houston a 21-

17 lead with an 8-vard reception

early in the fourth. Watt made it

23-17 when he sacked Blake Bor-

tles in the end zone for a safety a

few minutes later. The sack gave

him 201/2 this season, making him

the first player in NFL history to

have two seasons with 20 or more

final AFC wild-card spot.



20

playoffs.



SEATTLE - Marshawn Lynch

scored on a 9-yard run, Bruce

Irvin returned an interception

49 yards for a touchdown and

the Seahawks wrapped up home-

field advantage through the NFC

downs by Seattle (12-4) capped

a six-game win streak to end the

regular season. That earned the

Seahawks a second straight NFC

West title and the ninth division

advantage of two first-half turn-

St. Louis (6-10) couldn't take

title in franchise history.

overs by the Seahawks.

The two fourth-quarter touch-









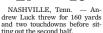




drew Luck threw for 160 yards and two touchdowns before sit-

The Colts (11-5) bounced back from their worst performance this season by nearly matching at halftime what they did offensively in the loss at Dallas. They wound up outgaining the Titans 378-192 as the AFC South champs swept their division a second straight season for the first time in franchise history. With their 10th straight loss

and Tampa Bay's loss to New Orleans, the Titans (2-14) finished their worst season since 1994





the NFC East.









Teddy

MINNEAPOLIS Bridgewater threw the go-ahead 44-yard touchdown pass to Adam Thielen in the third quarter, putting one more blemish on a forgettable year for the Bears.

Blair Walsh kicked two field goals, Audie Cole had 11 tackles in his first start, and the Vikings (7-9) ended coach Mike Zimmer's first year on a winning note.

Jay Cutler returned from a onegame benching with 172 yards on 23-for-36 passing without a fumble or an interception, but he rarely threw long and the offense was off all afternoon.

The Bears (5-11) finished with their worst record in 10 years, in the last game for coach Marc Trestman.



DENVER - C. J. Anderson ran for three touchdowns, and the Broncos earned a first-round bye and the AFC's No. 2 seed.

Peyton Manning guided the Broncos (12-4) to at least a tie for the best record in the NFL for the third consecutive season since his arrival in Denver. That's something he accomplished just twice in his 13 years in Indianapolis before missing all of 2011 because of spinal fusion surgery.

Manning, who completed 21 of 37 passes for 273 yards, failed to throw a TD pass for the second time in four weeks after throwing one for 51 straight games, three shy of Drew Brees' NFL record.

LANDOVER, Md. - DeMarco Murray and Dez Bryant broke franchise records as the Cowboys (12-4) prepped for the playoffs. The result was impressive

but meaningless for postseason nurnoses

Murray rushed for 100 yards on 20 carries, passing Emmitt Smith for the team single-season mark. Murray's 1,845 yards bet-tered Smith's 1,773 from 1995.

Bryant caught scoring passes of 65 and 23 yards to give him 16 touchdown receptions on the season, breaking Terrell Owens' team record of 15 set in 2007.

FOXBOROUGH, Mass. Orton threw for one touchdown, Anthony Dixon ran for another and the Bills finished their first winning season in 10 years with a win over the going-through-the motions Patriots.

With the top seed in the AFC playoffs already clinched, the Patriots used quarterback Tom Brady for only the first half and held out tight end Rob Gronkowski and five other starters.

The victory snapped several streaks: Buffalo's 0-12 record at Gillette Stadium and New England's 35 straight home wins against AFC teams.





MIAMI GARDENS, Fla. Geno Smith had his best game in a rocky season, throwing for a career-high 358 yards and three touchdowns.

Smith's performance more than negated a 97-yard run by Lamar Miller, the longest play from scrimmage in Dolphins history. The Jets (4-12) rallied from a 10-point third-quarter deficit, and Rex Ryan ordered a fake punt with four minutes left that

sealed the victory.

The game was entertaining but mostly meaningless because it in-volved two teams out of the playoff chase.





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EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. Mark Sanchez threw two touchdowns and the Philadelphia Eagles' special teams scored their seventh TD of this otherwise frustrating season in what

could have been Tom Coughlin's final game as New York's coach. Backup tight end Trey Burton returned a blocked punt 27 yards for a score in the third quarter, and Nate Allen iced the game with a late interception. The Eagles (10-6) snapped a threegame losing streak that knocked them out of playoff contention last week. The 10 wins matched their

Rookie Odell Beckham Jr. had 12 catches for a career-best 185 yards, including a 63-yard fourthquarter touchdown that got the Giants (6-10) within 31-26.

total last season when they won





Panthers players drench head coach Ron Rivera near the end of Sunday's 34-3 win

Panthers on to postseason with victory over Falcons

The Associated Press

ATLANTA- Coach Ron Rivera and the Carolina Panthers are headed back to the Owner Arthur Blank and the Atlanta

Falcons are preparing to hire a new head In a winner-take-all regular season fina-

le, the Panthers easily beat the Falcons 34-3 to win the weak NFC South on Sunday.

The victory gave Carolina (7-8-1) a division title for a second straight year, a firsttime achievement for the franchise, as the Panthers prepare to host Arizona in a wildcard playoff game on Saturday. Atlanta (6-10) has collapsed since nearly

winning the NFC title game two years ago. The Falcons, losers in 22 of their last 32 games, fired coach Mike Smith on Monday, one day after the end of his second straight losing season.

Though Smith won two division titles and made four playoff appearances in his first five years, those achievements weren't enough to prevent Atlanta's collapse over the last two seasons and save his job.

Smith leaves as the winningest coach in the Falcons' 49-year history. Smith said he never saw Sunday's hor-

rible performance coming after what he thought was a good week of practice and game-planning.

"It sends a signal to me that I didn't get the job done," Smith said. "I'm the one that's held responsible for it."

On the other hand, Rivera will have his team back at work preparing for Arizona. Despite being 3-8-1 following a lopsided

loss at Minnesota on Nov. 30, Carolina rallied while division rivals Atlanta and New Orleans fell apart.

"Our guys are the kind of guys that we want," Rivera said, "and I just felt if we kept playing and kept taking care of our business that we would get that opportunity."

Steelers wrap up AFC North title

Pittsburgh RB Bell injured in third quarter

By WILL GRAVES The Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Le'Veon Bell tugged at the top of his jersey while the Pittsburgh Steelers training staff tended to his throbbing right knee.

The Pittsburgh Steelers are heading back to the playoffs as division champions after a 27-17 win over Cincinnati on Sunday night. They just might have to begin their journey for a seventh Super Bowl without their talented and versatile catalyst.

The second-year running back was injured in the third quarter after a legal but low shot to the legs from Cincinnati's Reggie Nelson. The early diagnosis is a hy-perextended knee and no major structural damage. It's uncertain whether Bell will be available on Saturday when the Steelers (11-5) host Baltimore (10-6) in the wild-

"I can say right now from the things I've heard that he should be OK, but I can't really say," Pittsburgh backup running back Josh Harris said.

Neither can anyone else, leaving the surging Steelers with an unwanted question mark as they prepare for a return to the playoffs after a two-year absence.

I know if there is a chance that he can be out there, he's going to be because that's how he is," Steelers quarterback Ben Roethlisberger said.

Either way Pittsburgh will press on. The Steelers have won four straight and are 8-2 since falling to Cleveland on Oct. 12. Their sixth AFC North title this millennium and first since 2010 marked the end of a rebuilding process that began in earnest two vears ago. Pittsburgh endured 8-8 seasons in 2012 and 2013 but have roared back to prominence behind one of the NFL's most

The Steelers relied on it to bail them out late. Antwon Blake forced a fumble by Cincinnati's A.J. Green to end a promising Bengals drive late in the fourth quarter and Roethlisberger responded by turning a third-and-8 into a 63-yard touchdown pass



Green Bay's Tramon Williams, left. and Casey Hayward, right, break up a pass intended for the Detroit Lions' Golden Tate on Sunday. The Packers won 30-20.



Pittsburgh wide receiver Antonio Brown celebrates as he heads to the locker room after the Steelers' 27-17 win over the Cincinnati Bengals in Pittsburgh on Sunday.

to Antonio Brown. The Pro Bowl wide receiver's 129th and final catch of the season sealed Pittsburgh's rise from mediocrity.

"Who else was going to make (the play)?" Steelers coach Mike Tomlin said. "He needs no endorsement from me. He is who he is. I don't think any of us are surprised

when he delivers for us time and again."

The Bengals (10-5-1) turned it over three times and will play at Indianapolis on Sunday. Green left the game with concussion-like symptoms and his status for the playoffs is unclear. Even if he plays, Cincinnati knows it has to be crisper than it was on a night a chance to win a second

"We had a rough day," Cincinnati coach Marvin Lewis said. "It's key to take care of the football. We didn't do a very good job

Packers best Lions for 4th consecutive division crown

By Genaro C. Armas The Associated Press

GREEN BAY, Wis. - With quarterback Aaron Rodgers hurting again, Packers coach Mike McCarthy had to tweak the plan in the passing game against the Detroit Lions.

As it turns out, Eddie Lacy played just as crucial a role against one of the top run defenses in the league.

Rodgers threw two touchdown passes to Randall Cobb while playing with a sore left calf, Lacy gashed Detroit for 100 yards and the Packers won a fourth straight NFC North title with a 30-20 victory on Sunday.

With the win, Green Bay (12-4) earned a bye and secured the No. 2 seed in the NFC playoffs. Detroit (11-5) is the sixth seed, and will play at Dallas on Sunday.

"As bad as it felt, I thought if I can go out there and be able to do some things and we win, I get another week to rehab it," Rodg-

The franchise quarterback was out of

the game for about a seven-minute stretch between the second and third quarters. By the time he returned, the Lions had rallied from a 14-0 deficit to tie the game on two touchdown catches by receiver Calvin Johnson.

Rodgers hobbled back on to the field in the third quarter and led his team on a scoring drive that ended with a 13-yard touchdown pass to Cobb. The Packers didn't look back, though McCarthy had to change some plans on the fly with Rodgers having limited mobility.

There were more shotgun formations and quick passes, just like last week after Rodgers initially hurt his calf in a win over Tampa Bay.

But the Packers stuck with the plan on the ground. They were determined to keep running the ball in spite of the Lions' tough rush defense.

The Packers finished with 152 vards on the ground, a season-high on the ground against Detroit.

SPORTS



Three ballin'

Pistons hit 17 shots from behind arc in rout of Cavaliers | Page 24

NFL: WEEK 17 TAKEAWAYS



JOHN BAZEMORE/A

Carolina Panthers quarterback Cam Newton passes the ball against the Falcons on Sunday in Atlanta. The Panthers defeated the Falcons 34-3 to become just the second team in NFL history to win their division with a losing record.

Qualifying statements

Panthers, Ravens secure final playoff spots

The Associated Press

he division showdowns were won by the Packers, Panthers and Steelers. On to the playoffs.
Also qualifying for the Super Bowl chase were the Ravens, who got the final AFC wild card. And the Seahawks secured home-field advantage in the NFC playoffs, not a pleasant prospect to the rest of the conference.

Like Seattle, Green Bay finished 12-4 after defeating Detroit 30-20 Sunday. But the Seahawks, who beat St.

Inside:

- Steelers lose star RB Bell
- in victory over Bengals, Page 31
- Ravens score 17 in 4th quarter to rally past Browns. Page 29

Louis 20-6, held the tiebreaker because they beat the Packers in the season opener.

"Our main goal coming into the season was winning the division, but getting the No. 1 seed is just as big," Seattle linebacker K.J. Wright said.

Carolina (7-8-1) became the second division winner in NFL history with a losing record, but has won four in a row after a 34-3 romp at Atlanta to secure the NFC South

SEE SECURE ON PAGE 27

Firing squad: Multiple NFL coaches get axe | Page 27

